THE LETTERS

OF

VICTOR HUGO

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TRANSLATED BY

F. CLARKE, M.A.

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VOL. I.

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VICTOR HUGO

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THE LETTERS
OF
VICTOR HUGO

LETTERS TO HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, 1815–1826

To MADAME LA COMTESSE HUGO, *at Thionville.*

2nd August 1815.

MY DEAR MAMMA,—We are very dull here since you left. We often go to see M. Foucher, as you told us to do. He proposed to us to join in the lessons his sons are taking; we thanked him and declined. Every morning we work at Latin and mathematics. A letter with a black seal, and addressed to Abel, came the evening you went away. M. Foucher will send it on to you. He was kind enough to take us to the museum. . . . Come home soon. We don't know what to say or do without you: we are quite lost. We are always thinking of you. Mamma, mamma!—Your dutiful son,

VICTOR.

THE LETTERS OF VICTOR HUGO

To MONSIEUR LE GÉNÉRAL HUGO, *at his country-place of Saint-Lazare, near Blois.*

PARIS, *4th July* 1822.

MY DEAR, KIND PAPA,—With the completion of my business at the Ministry comes the day which is to make me a happy man;[1] my impatience is great, and you will understand this. When I have received all from you, how shall I be able to pay my debt?

I thought I had told you that Eugène has no means of support besides the allowance you make him, until he earns something by his own work; that is why I so often begged you to be generous to him. No doubt, when he calms down he will feel all the gratitude he owes you.

We shall continue to bear the sacrifice which necessity imposes on us; we do not doubt that, as it is your doing, the reason is that you could not act otherwise.

Farewell, dear papa; I am impatiently awaiting your poem and the advice you promise me. My warmest thanks for all the trouble you are taking with me; your hints may turn out very useful to me for my second edition, which I must soon begin to think about, for the present one is being exhausted far more rapidly than I dared hope. Do you think any copies will be sold at Blois?

I have no space to write to you about my grand literary plans, but enough to tell you once more how much I love and respect you.—With love, your dutiful son, VICTOR.

[1] His marriage with Mlle. Adèle Foucher.

TO FATHER AND MOTHER, 1815–1826

PARIS, *26th July.*

MY DEAR PAPA,—Your letter has made my joy and gratitude complete, but I did not expect anything less from my good and loving father. I have just come back from seeing M. Lourdoneix; in a few days he is to give me an exact date, and then I will show your letter to M. and Mme. Foucher. So I shall owe all to you,—my life, my happiness, everything! You have the right to expect the deepest gratitude from me, you who have filled the great blank left in my heart by the death of my beloved mother!

As regards the pension I have just got from the King's Privy Purse, I must tell you that I do not receive the July quarterly instalment, so that it will not begin till the 1st of October, which puts off the happy day to the end of September; it is a long time to wait, but I console myself by thinking that my happiness is settled. When hope has been changed into certainty, patience is an easier matter. Dear papa, if you only knew what an angel you will have for a daughter! I am still anxiously awaiting your poem, and I shall use the numbers of the Thionville paper in the way you suggest. A Spaniard named d'Abayma, who came to see me yesterday, spoke to me of my father in a way which would have made me feel proud of him, if I had not been so already.

I have no prejudice against your present wife, as I have not the honour of knowing her. I feel for her the respect which I owe to the lady who bears your honoured name; it was therefore without any reluctance that I begged you to express my sentiments to her. I could not

have selected a better person to do this, could I, my dear good father?

Farewell, dear papa; take care of yourself, and love your happy, devoted, and respectful son,

VICTOR.

In my next letter I will tell you of all the work which a happy married life will enable me to undertake with a calm spirit, a clear head, and a contented mind. Perhaps you will approve, at anyrate; that is my fondest wish.

PARIS, *8th August.*

MY DEAR PAPA,—Just as I am beginning this letter, my monthly allowance is brought me. The thirty-six francs which came with it shall be sent to their destination this very day. The numbers of the interesting Thionville papers which you intended for the *Académie des Sciences* and for the editor of the *Dictionnaire des Généraux Français* have already reached theirs.

I hasten to discuss your ingenious poem. I was longing to tell you all the pleasure I experienced in reading it; I have already read it three times, and I know some of the passages in it by heart. There are a number of excellent lines on every page—as for instance,

Et vendre à tout venant le pardon que je donne,

and descriptions full of life and *esprit*, such as that of Lucifer taking his telescope to look at the angel. Several of my friends, who are also among our most distinguished literary men, share my opinion of your work; so you see, dear papa, I am not biassed by the deep love and tender gratitude which I shall ever feel for you.—Your dutiful and respectful son,

VICTOR.

Another line, dear papa, although the post is just going. I cannot help telling you how surprised I am that you took such a short time to compose your pretty poem; pray tell me about your health in your next letter. That was a charming plan of spending the autumn with you; I recognised your kind heart in it, but this pleasure must be postponed till next year; nothing will stand in the way of it then.

PARIS, 31*st August* 1822.

Now, dear Papa, it is your turn to be bothered. There is every indication that my affairs at the Home Office will be settled at last, and that my happiness will begin; but I shall require my birth and baptismal certificates. I apply to you, my dear kind father, as I have no acquaintances at Besançon; I do not know how to set about getting these two documents; I must appeal to your inexhaustible kindness. I should like to have them at once, for if I waited longer I should be so afraid they

might delay my happiness, which seems already so long in coming. I know your kind heart, I know you will put yourself in my place; pardon me for troubling you once more. You sent us our certificates of birth four years ago, but when we entered our names at the School of Law we were obliged to leave them in the office, in conformity with the law, and the law does not allow of their return. You would therefore oblige me very much by getting this document for me, as well as my baptismal certificate, which is necessary for the Church, as you know.

Farewell, dear good papa; the offer in your charming letter, to send me some of the sketches you made of Saint-Lazare, fills me with joy and with tender gratitude. It will be delightful to me to put such precious ornaments in the apartment which will witness my happiness. Pray do not forget to keep this promise, to which I attach such importance.

Send me an answer as soon as possible, and tell me a great deal about your health, your daily occupations, and your affection for your sons, which can scarcely be repaid by all the love and respect of your own

VICTOR.

Everybody here sends you their best love. I fancy that you see at Blois the papers which notice my collection of poems; if you like, I will send you those which I come across. Pray tell me what you are doing just now; you know how it interests me. Forgive this scrawl, I am writing with a maimed hand; I cut myself slightly with a penknife, but it won't be anything. Farewell, dear papa; once more, fond love.

TO FATHER AND MOTHER, 1815–1826

PARIS, 13*th September* 1822.

MY DEAR PAPA,—M. de Lourdoneix having faithfully promised me that my Home Office pension should be paid me during M. de Peyronnet's *ad interim* administration, I have delivered your letter to M. Foucher, and you should have received his reply. We are now waiting only for your duly authenticated consent.

Dear papa, Abel's silence is due only to his many engagements. I showed him your letter, and he will himself hasten to dispel a doubt which is painful to him.

I am sure I have been baptized, even though it was not at Besançon, and you can understand how annoying it would be to have to go through the ceremony again at my age. My illustrious friend, M. de Lamennais, told me that a declaration to the effect that I had been baptized abroad (in Italy), coupled with yours, would suffice. You understand what important reasons I have for wishing you to send me this simple declaration.

To-day is the 13th, my dear father, and I have not yet received our monthly allowance. You are always so careful in anticipating your son's wants that I am sure the delay is due solely to the Messageries. But I tell you of it, dear papa, feeling convinced that you will hasten to relieve our embarrassment.

Farewell, my excellent father; I love you, I send you my best love, and I am longing to see you, and to see you in good health.—Your loving and dutiful son,

VICTOR.

PARIS, 18*th September* 1822.

MY DEAR PAPA,—I am answering your letter by return of post to thank you for the declaration you have sent me, and I beg you will be as prompt in letting me have your duly authenticated consent. I am most anxious that my marriage should take place on the 7th or 8th of October, for a very important reason (in addition to the sentimental ones, which you know are not less so), viz. that I am obliged to give up the rooms I am now occupying on the 7th of October. I have therefore begged M. and Mme. Foucher to have the banns published for the first time on Sunday next, the 22nd; they will be over by Sunday the 6th of October; but these banns must also be published where you reside, and by the 6th October notice must be received at our parish of Saint-Sulpice of the complete publication of the banns at Blois, which cannot be done unless you will kindly buy off one of them from your parish. You understand, my dear papa, how pressing is the necessity which makes me prefer this urgent request. It is a question of sparing me the trouble and expense of two moves, one after the other, at a time which is naturally attended with so much trouble and expense; it is also a question of hastening on my happiness by a few days, and I know your kind heart too well to say more.

I have everything in order; I have had a notarial copy made of the certificate of birth left at the Law School, which is as good as the original. When I have received your consent, I shall be able to comply with all

the civil formalities; the document you have sent me to-day will do also for the religious formalities.

The Christian name and surname of my beloved *fiancée* are Adèle Julie Foucher, a minor, and daughter of Pierre Foucher, Head Clerk at the War Office, Knight of the Legion of Honour, and of his wife Anne Victoire Asseline. You will receive this information for the publication of the banns.

Do try, dear papa, to send us the arrears of our allowance as soon as possible; you understand how much I am in need of money just now. I entreat you also, dear kind papa, to do your best to continue your allowance to my brothers Eugène and Abel. Do not forget that Eugène was a little off his head when he wrote to you, and give him, if you can, this fresh proof of your fatherly love and generosity. As for me, I shall not trouble you with my wants; my Government pension will be paid me from the 1st of October; I shall doubtless not have to wait for my home allowance, and although I must spend a good deal of money just now, still, by working hard and sitting up late, I shall perhaps manage to make it good;—work will be easy to me now; I am going to be so happy!

In conclusion, allow me to remind you, my own dearest papa, how very important are all my requests to you about forwarding your legal consent, about the publication of the banns, and buying off one set in your parish.

Farewell; forgive this scrawl, and accept my warmest and best thanks.—Your dutiful and respectful son,

VICTOR.

M. and Mme. Foucher are much touched by all your kind messages to them. You will see one day what a present they are making you, when I bring you your daughter.

I will send you at once all the papers I have been able to get in which my collection of poems is noticed. It still sells very well, and in a short time it will have paid its expenses. This is extraordinary at this time of year.

I have been obliged to correct an oversight in the document you sent me; I was born on the 26th of February 1802, not 1801.

PARIS, 19*th October* 1822.

MY DEAR PAPA,—The happiest and the most grateful of sons is writing to you. From the 12th of this month I have enjoyed the most delightful and the most perfect happiness, and I see no end to it in the future; it is to you, dear kind papa, that I owe these pure and lawful joys, it is you who have given me my happiness; accept then, for the third time, the assurance of my deepest and tenderest gratitude.

I did not write to you during the first days of my bliss, because my heart was too full for words; even now you will make allowance for me, my good father, for I hardly know what I am writing. I am absorbed in a deep feeling of love, and, so long as this letter is full of it, I have no doubt but that your kind heart will be

satisfied. Your angelic Adèle unites with me; if she dared she would write to you, but now that we two are one, her heart feels as mine for you.

Allow me, in concluding this too short letter, my dear good father, to commend my brothers' interests to you; I have no doubt you have already decided in their favour, and it is only to hasten the execution of your decision that I mention the subject again.

Farewell, then, dear papa; I leave you with regret. Still, it is a pleasure to me to assure you once more of the dutiful love and unchanging gratitude of your happy children. VICTOR.

My two brothers send you their fond love. My father-in-law and mother-in-law were much pleased with your letter; I believe M. Foucher will soon send you a reply; he is looking after my Uncle Louis' interests at the War Office.

PARIS, 19*th November* 1822.

MY DEAR PAPA,—All the tender and personal expressions in your kind letter have been received here by two hearts which are now one in their love for you. I cannot tell you how touched my Adèle was by the expression of your affection, which she well deserves in return for that which she has deigned to bestow on your son. She will tell you herself all she feels for you. Pray be so good as to tell our stepmother how grateful

we are for all that she kindly did to hasten our happy union.

I showed your letter to my brothers. Abel is going to write to you; they beg me to send you their best love. Pray accept the same from myself, and allow me to leave the rest of this sheet for your daughter.—Your dutiful and respectful son,

VICTOR.

20th December 1822.

MY DEAR PAPA,—I am writing to you from the bedside of Eugène, who is ill, and dangerously ill. His deplorable state of mind, about which I had so often told you, grew so much worse during the last few months as to profoundly alarm us all, although we could not seriously remedy it, for, as he retained the free use of his will, he obstinately declined all help and attention. His love of solitude, indulged in to a frightful extent, has accelerated a crisis, which may perhaps be salutary—at least, one must hope so—but which is none the less extremely serious, and will leave him in a critical condition for a long time to come. Abel and M. Foucher will give you more details on this melancholy subject. For the present I hasten to beg you to be good enough to send us some money; you will easily understand what difficulties I was in when this sad event overtook me. Abel is also taken by surprise, and we apply to you as to a father whom your sons have ever

found ready to help them in their troubles, and to whom the misfortunes of his children come before all others.

In this sad position we have, at anyrate, been fortunate in the chance which made us take one of your old acquaintances, Dr. Fleury, as our doctor.

Farewell, dear kind papa; I am broken-hearted at the sad news I am giving you. Our invalid had a pretty good night; he is better this morning, but he has been quite delirious since the day before yesterday, and he still wanders a good deal; he was bled yesterday, he was given an emetic this morning, and I am at his bedside nursing him. Farewell, farewell; the post is going, and I have only time to send you my love and to promise you longer letters from Abel and M. Foucher.—Your loving and dutiful son,

VICTOR.

To M. EUGÈNE HUGO, *care of* GÉNÉRAL HUGO, *his father*, 73 *Grande Rue du Foix, Blois.*

Tuesday, 5*th March.*

Your letter, my dear kind Eugène, gave us very great pleasure. We hope the improvement in your health will continue to the extent we all wish, and that you will soon recover your tranquillity of mind, and with it that vigour and liveliness of imagination which we used to admire in your writings.

Say, repeat to all around you, how much we love

them for the care they are taking of you; tell my father that my regret at being away from him and you is mitigated by the happiness of knowing you are together. Tell him that his name is often mentioned here as a talisman of happiness, that the months which must elapse before your return will seem very long to us. Say to him on our behalf all that your heart feels for him, and we shall be satisfied. Write to us as often as possible.—Your brother and friend,

VICTOR.

Tuesday, 5th March.

MY DEAR PAPA,—Your absence deprives us of one of the greatest pleasures we have experienced in the happiness of our married life,—that of seeing you. Now we are looking forward more than ever to the month that will give us a child, because it will restore our father to us. Eugène also will return, and will certainly come back happy and cured.

Our Uncle Francis has been spending a few days here with his wife, and this has prevented our writing to you before. We made the acquaintance of our aunt, who appears happy, and seems to be intelligent and agreeable. Francis also is very happy; he was most kind and affectionate to us, and was very sorry you were no longer in Paris.

My wife is as well as can be expected in her situation. I was both distressed and delighted to hear that

you had been unwell and that you had recovered. We beg you will congratulate your wife as well on her restoration to health, of which our good Eugène tells us.

I was told some time ago of a pension of 3000 francs supposed to have been granted me, and payable at the Home Office. I have heard nothing more of it; if this good news is confirmed I shall hasten to tell you of it, as I am sure our kind father will be much interested.

Farewell, my dear good father; everyone here loves you and embraces you, as does your loving and dutiful son,

VICTOR.

Our kind regards to our stepmother.

24th May 1823.

MY DEAR PAPA,—I gave your letter to Eugène yesterday,—it both touched him and grieved him; his disappointment at not being able to see you again at Blois has been a little softened by the hope I held out to him of seeing you at Paris two months hence; this seemed a long time to him. I must also tell you, dear papa, that I did not find him so well.

The patients in M. Esquirol's establishment have the greatest attention paid them, but what is so fatal to Eugène is the solitude and idleness to which he is condemned there. A few words that dropped from hi[redacted] showed me that in his over-heated brain he has concei[redacted]

a horror of this *prison*, as he calls it; he told me in a low tone that *women were being murdered in the cellars, and that he had heard their shrieks.* You see, dear papa, that his stay there is doing him more harm than good.

Again, the terms (which M. Esquirol is to tell you about) are very high,—four hundred francs a month. Besides, Dr. Fleury thinks that walking and exercise are absolutely necessary for the patient. I transmit all these details, my dear father, without giving you advice. You know better than I what ought to be done; still, I think I may tell you that there are, as I am assured, other establishments of the same kind where patients are just as well treated and do not pay as much.

It appears they have not taken sufficient pains to hide from Eugène that he is among *mad* people, and consequently he is much troubled by this idea, which, however, I was able to combat successfully yesterday.

I write to you in haste, my dear good father, amid all the worries caused me by my publisher's bankruptcy. Beware of our good Abel's excess of confidence when you sell your Memoirs; it is he who, quite involuntarily it is true, has let me in for this business.

Farewell, my dear good father; we all send you our fondest love.—Your devoted and respectful son,

VICTOR.

Our kind regards to your wife, from whom we hope hear soon.

GENTILLY, *27th June* 1823.

MY DEAR PAPA,—After remaining a few weeks at Val-de-Grâce, Eugène has just been transferred to Saint-Maurice, which is a branch establishment of the Charenton Asylum, under the superintendence of Dr. Royard-Collard. The expenses of the move and of the treatment are defrayed by Government, but it will be easy for you to improve his position by making him a more or less small allowance; we are told that this is generally done with patients of a certain rank. Besides, Dr. Fleury was to have written to one of his friends, who will have charge of Eugène in this establishment; and M. Girard, the director of the Veterinary School at Alfort, and a great friend of M. Foucher's, has promised him to bespeak the greatest attention for our poor dear invalid, and to make it a personal matter. M. Foucher, Abel, or I intend writing to you immediately about these matters, as well as about our unfortunate brother's health, which is still in such a sad state. My Adèle's sufferings, which increase as her time grows nearer, have prevented me from going to see him in his new abode; I am therefore unable to give you such recent news about him as I should have wished. The state of his mind, however, varies very little, as I had occasion to observe in my frequent visits to him at Dr. Esquirol's house and at Val-de-Grâce: always haunted by a melancholy idea of some imminent danger, all his utterances, as well as all his movements and all his looks, betray this secret pre-occupation, and I fear that the way in which society treats sufferers of this kind, viz. confinement and idleness, will but increase a

melancholy, the only remedy for which, as I think, would be change and amusement. What is so terribly hard is that the application of this remedy is well-nigh impossible, because it is dangerous.

I enclose a letter from M. Esquirol, which throws no light on the subject, and adds nothing to my personal opinions and special remarks about Eugène; I think I have already told you most of what the doctor writes, to whom I had already stated all the facts which he gives; it is true that the patient had only stayed a very short time in his house, but I think it did him more harm than good. M. Katzenberger has sent M. Foucher the four hundred francs which Dr. Esquirol charges for a month's board and lodging, and M. Foucher has told the doctor that the money is at his disposal.

I am glad, dear papa, to turn your thoughts to less mournful subjects by telling you about the auspicious event which will involve another equally auspicious for us, viz. your return. My beloved Adèle expects her confinement in about five weeks. Do come as soon as it is convenient to you. I should be so delighted if my child could receive its name from you; and it is a subject of innocent rejoicing to me that it was left to me, the youngest of your sons, to be the first to make you a grandfather. I already love this child, because it will be another link between my father and myself.

I am obliged for your proposal relating to M. de Chateaubriand, but the internal position of the Ministry makes any communication at this moment between M. Chateaubriand and M. de Corbière specially delicate; you will understand what I can only hint at here.

The hopes which have been dangled before me so long have assumed a somewhat positive shape in the last two days. If they are realised at last, I will let you know of it at once. As for the Spanish property, I have no doubt that an application coming from you would be perfectly well received, and I would present it myself to the Minister for Foreign Affairs; only, I am afraid that a decision would rest not so much with my illustrious friend as with M. de Martignac, who is M. de Villèle's creature.

Farewell, dear kind father; Adèle wishes me to leave the rest of this sheet for her. I had a great deal to tell you, but I must yield to so natural a wish, and confine myself to sending you my fond love and respect.—Your son,

VICTOR.

1st July 1823.

MY DEAR PAPA,—My good little cousin, Adolphe Trebuchet, will give you this letter, in which you will find M. Esquirol's receipt. We have not yet been able to see our poor Eugène at Saint-Maurice; permission is required, and it is somewhat difficult to obtain. Abel, however, has meanwhile got news of him, which is unfortunately far from satisfactory; he is still plunged in the same melancholy; for some time he refused all food, but at last nature triumphed, and he consented to eat. The treatment he is undergoing does not, it appears, entail

any additional charge as yet; if it should be so, they will let us know.

These details break my heart, dear papa, and I need all my joy at the thought of your approaching return not to give way to despair at this moment.

M. Foucher and Abel will write to you soon, and I myself will not delay to communicate to you anything fresh in the state of our dear patient.

Farewell, dear papa; I need not ask you to be kind to Adolphe, whom we all love like a brother; I believe he is very anxious to see Chambord, and it will be a pleasure to him as well as to you if the hurry of his journey will allow him to spend a few days at Blois.

I send you fond love from myself and from Adèle; pray give our kindest regards to our stepmother, who is, we hope, quite well again.—Your dutiful and respectful son,

V. M. H.

24th July 1823.

MY DEAR PAPA,—I did not tell you sooner of the event which gives you one more being in the world to love, because I wished to spare your fatherly heart all the uneasiness, anxiety, and anguish I have been tortured by during the last week. My wife has had a very bad confinement, and has suffered a good deal in consequence ever since; the child was almost dying when it came into the world; its mother's milk, which had become

deteriorated by all she had gone through during her pregnancy and at her confinement, did not agree with the feeble little creature. After several trials of it, which nearly endangered your grandson's life, we were obliged to think of having him nursed by a stranger. You can imagine what difficulty I had in persuading Adèle to consent to this, as she was looking forward so much to the fatigues of nursing. It was not the serious risk to her own health, but the danger which threatened that of the child, that decided her; so she has bravely sacrificed her mother's right to the interests of her son, and we have put the child out to nurse. In this emergency we have been fortunate enough to find a very good wet-nurse who lives in our part of the town, and, although these women are very expensive in Paris, still the urgency of the case, and the facility of getting news of your grandson Leopold at any moment, made me readily incur the expense.

Now, at last, after so much anxiety and uncertainty, I can give you some good news. My beloved Adèle is improving visibly; we hope she will soon have got rid of her milk. The child, strengthened by its healthy and abundant supply of food, is going on very well, and bids fair to become a grandfather, some day, like you.

You see, my dear kind father, that I have spared you the anxiety which you would certainly have felt as deeply as I did. This is the reason of a silence which you will approve, although perhaps you blamed me for it at first. Your joy will now be as unalloyed as ours, which is greatly enhanced by the thought of so soon clasping you in our arms.

Farewell, my good father. Come soon, and send me your thanks; nine months ago I gave you a daughter, who loves you as I do; now we give you a son, who will love you as we do. And what greater comfort is there in life than the tie of affection which unites parents and children?—Your dutiful and respectful son,

VICTOR.

Give our love to our stepmother, whom we expect to see with you.

During the last fortnight that I have been acting as nurse, I have not been able to look after our dear Eugène as I should have wished; but you are coming. Would that I could take a less gloomy view of his future!

29th July 1823.

MY DEAR PAPA,—I was congratulating myself on having only good news to send you, when unforeseen circumstances oblige me to apply to you for advice and assistance: the wet-nurse to whom we were obliged to entrust our child does not suit us at all. She deceives us; she seems to be bad-tempered and insincere; she has taken advantage of our having been compelled to find a nurse for the child. At first we thought she was kind and gentle; now we have but too many reasons for taking our poor little Leopold out of her hands as quickly as possible. So Adèle and I, now that we have

settled to take him away from this woman, would be very glad if you would be kind enough to find for us, either at Blois or in the neighbourhood, a wet-nurse who has not been nursing more than five months, and whose antecedents and character are satisfactory; anyhow, we should both be quite easy in our mind, knowing that our Leopold would be looked after by you and your wife. This is why we have decided to send him to Blois rather than anywhere else.

It is needless, my dear good father, to press you for a speedy reply; the slightest delay might be injurious to your little grandson's health. I do not ask you to forgive us for all the trouble we are causing you; I know that your kind paternal heart takes a pleasure in it.

Farewell, dear papa, Eugène's *physical health* is better; everyone here embraces you as fondly as your son loves you. Make haste and come, send me an answer soon, and believe in my unchanging and dutiful love,

VICTOR.

I am ordering *La Muse Française*, a literary periodical which I am helping to edit, to be sent to you. I will give you the second edition of *Han d'Islande* in Paris.

It is of great importance that the wet-nurse whom you will be kind enough to find for us should have the child at once, for it makes me uneasy to see it in the hands of this woman. Try to bring her with you, and in any case reply by return of post; for Adèle is very anxious, and her only hope is in you, who she knows is so kind, and whom she loves so much.

3rd August [1823].

MY DEAR PAPA,—To be able to express the joy and gratitude with which your letter fills us, one would require the power of describing all the tender affection and touching kindness contained in your fatherly heart. So you wish to perform my paternal duties even better than I do, and indeed poor little Leopold's first smile and his first look will be for you. I should like to pour out here all the love your daughter and I feel for you, our best of fathers, but I should have to repeat the subject of all our conversation for the last two days, so I confine myself to the limits of this sheet of paper.

When I received your letter, my heart was so full that I wanted to answer it immediately, but your wise advice got the better of my impatience, and I waited until your excellent arrangements had been carried out, to express our warmest gratitude to you, and at the same time give you news of your Leopold, the wet-nurse, and my Adèle.

The wet-nurse arrived yesterday in good health and spirits; she gave me your letter, and your instructions were followed to the letter. Everyone was delighted with her and her baby. In the course of the same morning we took your poor grandchild away from his unnatural foster-mother, and he began to perform his duties in the most satisfactory way; I do not know if it is the effect of paternal illusion or not, but we think he already looks better this morning.

Farewell, my dear kind father; pray tell your wife how deeply and sincerely grateful we are to her; we

long to be able to tell her so ourselves, and we send you our fond love, while looking forward to that happy day.—Your dutiful and grateful son,

VICTOR.

Eugène's bodily health continues good, but he is still painfully slovenly. A part only of his linen was sent with him to Charenton from Val-de-Grâce; we are trying to get hold of the rest to have it taken to him. What annoys me very much is the extreme difficulty of seeing our poor brother at Saint-Maurice.

WAR OFFICE, *6th August* 1823.

MY DEAR PAPA,—Your letter has given me real pain, and I long for you to receive this one, that I may feel somewhat comforted: how could you imagine for one moment that I was not most deeply grateful for all the kindness your wife has lavished on our Eugène and our Leopold? I could not have been a brother or father and remain insensible to the value of all she has done for them, and, in consequence, for me. If my thanks were addressed principally to you, the reason was, that we look on our father as the source of all love and tenderness, and that I thought it would please you to pass on to your wife the expression of my deep and tender filial gratitude, and that, coming from you, this tribute would be far more highly appreciated than if it came from me.

I implore you, my dear kind father, do not pain me so again; I am quite sure your wife could not have thought me ungrateful, or have believed that I was not sincerely touched by all her care of poor Leopold; and how indeed would it be possible for me not to feel deeply moved by her kindly solicitude, which has probably saved my child's life? Dear papa, I repeat, hasten to make up to me for the pain which you have so unjustly caused me amid so much joy, and which seemed to me still more hard at a time when my heart was so freely opening to every tender and happy feeling.

Farewell. I will not dwell further on an explanation which is already too long for your affection and mine, and the unpleasantness of which will only be completely removed by the happiness of seeing you soon here again, as well as your wife.

All are continuing to improve here,—mother, child, and wet-nurse.

Now that I have a little breathing time, I hope to see something of our poor Eugène, and to take him the rest of his things to-morrow, Thursday; he too, however, continues to improve a little.

So, my dear good father, let us see you again soon, and our happiness will be complete. Please send me an answer quickly, and come, if you can, still more quickly. Everyone here sends their fond love to you and to Leopold's grandmamma, who, I trust, will sing my praises and plead my cause with you, as you will not plead mine with her.—Your devoted and dutiful son,

VICTOR.

My Adèle begs me to give you and your wife a thousand kind messages from her.

Abel joins us in this; he is still keeping well, and is longing to see you.

13th September 1823.

MY DEAR PAPA,—The only consolation we could have for the loss of our father and son, was your kind and valued letter. The loving care which your wife lavished on her poor little grandson during the journey touched and affected us deeply. Every day brings us a fresh proof that she has as much affection for us as you have, and it is a real pleasure to me to bear witness to this.

My Adèle has not been out since you left; she has got a troublesome place on her foot, which prevents her from walking, and at times even gives her a good deal of pain. She bears this fresh trouble with her usual cheerfulness, but I am very sorry about it for her.

Much as I should like to continue this letter, I must finish it here; my wife, who has much to say to your wife, asks me to let her have the rest of the sheet. I hope Leopold is going on well. Give my kindest regards to his grandmother, my love to his Uncle Paul; and tell me if his eyes have grown larger since his journey, by dint of opening. Abel and I send you our fond love.—Your devoted and dutiful son,

VICTOR.

I will try to give you news of Eugène in my next letter.

4th October 1823.

MY DEAR KIND PAPA,—Too long a time has elapsed since I wrote you a good long letter, not to feel the necessity of telling you how deeply moved I am by all the kindness lavished on our Leopold by you and his excellent grandmamma. The first letter I am able to write with my hand, which is nearly well, must be for you, dear papa. I do not know how I am to express all my feelings of gratitude and affection, but this inability is itself a source of happiness to me. May your grandson one day become worthy of you, and repay you, as well as the second mother he has found in your wife, with the tenderest and most devoted filial affection! It will be easy for me to inspire him with these sentiments.

We hope that his new diet continues to agree with the poor little lamb. Paul told us of the way in which he is petted by you, as well as by his grandmother and the whole household; Adèle was moved to tears at hearing this, and it made the same impression on me.

My wife, who is not very well, and is dosing herself, wishes very much to be the first to read your Memoirs.

Désir de femme est un feu qui dévore.

I have requested Ladvocat to forward me the sheets as they are printed; if you have time, write to him to send them quicker.

Farewell, dearest and best of fathers; we very seldom see Abel, but I send you his love as well as mine.—Your loving and dutiful son,

VICTOR.

My kindest regards to grandmamma.

6th October 1823.

MY DEAR PAPA,—Yesterday my wife's impatience for news of her Leopold made her open the letter you wrote to his father. You can imagine her anxiety and grief.

As for me, my kind good father, I have complete confidence in your wife's maternal care. Tell her, repeat it a hundred times, that no one feels more deeply than I all she does for the poor child, who will be hers even more than mine.

We hope,—because your letter permits us to hope, because your wife has had the helpful thought of appealing to Heaven, because, in short, you are both on the spot, you, his kind parents, his protectors, his saviours.

Send us news of him soon, dear papa; we hope, but we are resigned; this also is a power which comes from Heaven. Adèle awaits your reply with fortitude; I do not send you her love, she wishes to do it herself. Give my warmest and best thanks to the poor little angel's grandmother. I embrace you again once more with respect and affection.

13th October 1823.

DEAR PAPA,—I will not add to your grief by describing ours; you have felt all I am feeling; your wife has gone through all that Adèle has.

No, I will not sadden you with all our affliction; if you were here, dearest father, we would weep together, and would comfort each other by mingling our tears.

I am not answering your letter; I heard the fatal news from Mme. Foucher. Her first impulse was to hide the two letters, for fear Adèle should read them, and she has not been able to find them since.

However, she told me of all your grief, and of all your loving and pious intentions, that the dear little soul's memory shall be preserved on earth as it will abide for ever in our hearts.

Farewell, my dear kind papa; do not take my loss too much to heart.

Yesterday (12th October) was the anniversary of our wedding-day. God has granted us a consolation by recalling this sweet memory of happiness in the midst of all our sorrow.

Once more, farewell; my wife's heart and mine are full of love for you both.—Your dutiful son,

VICTOR.

Saturday, November [1823].

MY DEAR PAPA,—I write you a few lines in great haste; M. de Féraudy is waiting for my letter and the

parcel; my wife is hastening to finish the drawing she is sending to her kind parents at Blois; I hope you will be pleased with it; I say no more, for I should be afraid, in praising my Adèle's talent, to seem as if I wished to enhance the value of her present. We should much have liked to send you this one framed; but as M. de Féraudy made some remarks about the difficulty of carrying it, you will understand that imperative reasons of good-breeding prevented us from sending you this fine drawing in all its glory.

Good-bye till we meet again; M. de Féraudy undertook the commission in the most obliging way, and I beg you to repeat to him at Blois how much indebted we are to him.

It seems a long time to me, dear papa, since we had any news of you. How is your wife? I will try to find what you ask me for.

My Adèle is still very unwell. This blow has not helped to set her up; still, it was a great comfort to her to do something for you, dear father, and for her Leopold's grandmother.

She is not using her pen to write to you at this moment, because she is still busy with her pencil.

I cannot help telling you in confidence that everyone here who has seen her drawing admires it immensely.

Perhaps our good Adolphe is at Blois just now; give him my love till I give him yours.

Farewell, my dear kind father; our best love to you.

V.

27th March 1824.

MY DEAR PAPA,—I conclude from your letter, otherwise so full of kindness and affection, that you have not yet received my new composition, although Ladvocat the bookseller had promised to send you a copy on vellum, on which I had written a few words; let me know if you have received it.

I am writing you again to-day a *provisional* letter in the interval between two *indispensable* and, I can assure you, extremely troublesome matters of business. Nothing takes up one's time so much as the publication of a tiresome book.

M. de Clermont-Tonnerre, with whom I lunched yesterday, begged me to write and tell you that the Duke of Angoulème had spoken to him of you and of your Memoirs, *which he has read with the greatest interest*, and that he regretted you had not been employed in the last Spanish war.

My wife goes on well, but not as well as I could wish; however, we are not anxious about her; but, though I regret it, I cannot help approving the doctor's orders to her not to go out driving.

This deprives us of a great pleasure which we were looking forward to for the spring, but which we hope is only postponed for six months.

Farewell, dear papa; Adèle and I send you our best love, and the same to your good wife.—Your devoted and dutiful son,

VICTOR.

Everybody here is quite well.

27th June 1824.

MY DEAR PAPA,—Notwithstanding all M. Foucher's efforts, and General de Coëtlogon's goodwill, we have not succeeded this time. Your application arrived too late; and for some time past the Duke of Angoulème had reserved the Inspector-Generalships for General Officers of the army in Spain. I do not know, dear papa, if this is a real misfortune; it is not a slight on your long and glorious services, as there can be no doubt that your claim would have been successful if there had been any competition; but the appointments were already placed at the Prince's disposal. Besides, it seems to me to increase your chances of promotion among the Lieutenant-Generals at the fête of Saint-Louis; and with M. de Clermont-Tonnerre's support (unfortunately, I can no longer say and M. de Chateaubriand's) it may be quite possible to obtain for you, then, that highest mark of military distinction which should have been yours so long ago.

I believe M. Foucher takes the same view as I do; however, he is going to write to you.

As for me, I am scribbling this letter in a great hurry; my eyes are still very weak, and our work is not yet over. My Adèle, who keeps well, is going to write to you, and assure you and your wife, once more, of our filial and dutiful devotion.

VICTOR.

If my illustrious friend comes back to office, our chances will be increased threefold. We have seen

much more of him since his disgrace; we had lost sight of him a good deal while he was in favour.

Let us hear from you soon.

19th February 1825.

I am adding a few words, dear papa, to our Adèle's letter. I wish I could add something to the expression of her affection for you and your wife; but I could not express better than her what she feels as deeply as I do.

As she tells you, I meant to send you the portrait of your Léopoldine in an early letter, but I want you to have a good likeness, and have already had it begun over again two or three times. I will not delay any longer to ask for news of you for ourselves, for Abel, and all the Foucher family.

Rabbe, who came to dinner with us here yesterday, spoke of you in terms of the most tender and respectful attachment; he is a kind and noble friend.

Louis sent us a splendid hamper of game a few days ago, which we ate together, regretting much that you were not here to share it.

Farewell, my dearest and best of fathers. I am trying to get hold of some work for our stay at Blois, to which we are looking forward with so much pleasure.

Our Didine is charming; she is like her mother and her grandfather; our love to her kind godmother.—Your loving and dutiful son,

V. H.

27th February 1825.

MY DEAR PAPA,—You will have seen that our letters have crossed. I hope that our letter will have given you as much pleasure as yours has us; it could not have brought us pleasanter news than that of your speedy arrival, and in writing this I almost hope it may not find you at Blois.

You cannot imagine how much we are looking forward to showing you our Léopoldine, who is still very small, but quite well, and so charming!—she will love you both as we love you; we cannot say more.

We are almost glad to have been without news of you during part of the month; as you have been ill, we should have been so anxious. Now we have only the pleasure of knowing you are quite well again.

Farewell, dear kind papa; I do not write to you at greater length, as we shall soon be able to communicate by word of mouth.

Whatever may be the business that brings you here, you know you can count in all ways, and in everything, on our devotion, as well as on our loving and dutiful affection.

Give our love to Léopoldine's kind godmother.

VICTOR.

GENTILLY, *19th June* 1825.

MY DEAR PAPA,—I am answering your letter from the country, where I went to spend a few days with a

friend of mine, who lives about six miles from Paris. I am sorry you are in the country too just now; the excessive heat, the loneliness and want of comfort of La Miltière, make me uneasy about your precious health. I think you ought to have put off this journey, however important it might have been, and not have ventured alone into the arid regions of La Sologne at this time of year. You know as well as I do what unhealthy exhalations arise from damp and sandy places in very hot weather, and my Adèle scolds you gently for giving us the anxiety of knowing that you are in those parts.

The Paris newspapers have announced your promotion in the most flattering terms. Never mind the omission which they so often make. What does jealousy matter to you? Your name and your reputation are enough to excite envy; make up your mind, dear father, to bear this drawback to every high position.

I am not surprised to hear your wife has not received her copy; I gave her parcel, with many others, to Ladvocat to put in the post. You know how careless he is; as I was leaving for the country, I was obliged to depend on him for this, and I have already had several complaints similar to yours. The messenger who is going to post this letter in Paris will take with it a sharp note to Ladvocat, and instructions to repair this omission at once.

If I had only one copy of it here I would send it straight to your wife, but I hope Ladvocat will be more careful this time.

I am glad that my Ode pleased you; its success here

surpasses all my hopes. It has been reproduced in seven or eight daily papers; I am going to present it to the King.

Farewell, my good father; I have only time to close this letter and to send you my best love. My wife and Didine send theirs to your wife.

We have been rather anxious about Didine the last few days; her teeth are worrying her.

I have this moment received a letter from Émile Deschamps, who says: "General Hugo's promotion has been a great pleasure to us; is there any means of sending him our congratulations and my respectful compliments?" Everyone is delighted.

PARIS, 18*th July* 1825.

MY DEAR PAPA,—I am really very sorry to be obliged to send you the enclosed letter and memorandum. These two documents need a little explanation; and here it is. A few days ago my old and worthy master, M. de la Rivière, called on me; I was not at home. He left word that he had something of importance to communicate to me; I lost no time in going to see him, as I always do when I think he may want me. The worthy man then explained to me that his position, his age, and that of his wife, made it every day more incumbent on him to remind me of a debt which he had not mentioned before, thinking that neither your means nor ours would allow us to discharge it;

but that, necessity getting the better of his excessive scrupulousness, he was at last forced to take this step. The debt amounts to 486 francs 80 centimes, and particulars of it are given in the enclosed memorandum. I remember perfectly well our finding this account at my mother's death among her papers, but I thought Abel had undertaken to send it to you, and I have since completely forgotten the debt, which I thought had been paid with the few other trifling debts left by my mother, the greater part of which were defrayed at the time by the sale of her plate and dresses; besides, I knew you had satisfied the other creditors, and I thought M. de la Rivière was among their number. As the matter was pressing, I consulted my wife, and with her consent I hastened to send M. de la Rivière a sum of *two hundred francs* which I had at my disposal, and with which I intended to buy myself a watch; this sum, dear papa, will be so much towards the total of the debt,—giving up this watch is a very small privation to me, and I can do it without inconvenience. Besides, I know, my good father, that you are far from rich, and, as some of the expense incurred by M. de la Rivière was on my account, these 200 francs will be my personal contribution; therefore you have to provide only the remaining balance of 286 fr. 80 c. It is quite unnecessary for me to tell you, dear papa, how sacred a debt of this kind is. The little we know, the little we are, we owe in great measure to this venerable man, and I have no doubt you will hasten to pay him, the more so as he is in need of the money; he has nothing to depend on but the proceeds of a small elementary

school, the slender income from which is diminishing daily, his increasing weakness of body and mind causing him to lose all his pupils by degrees. He has waited for ten years, and with admirable delicacy; and that is the only fault we can find with him, for I am sure you would have settled his claim had you known of it sooner. This is what I told him when I begged him to send in his account at once, that I might forward it to you; you will find it enclosed with the letter he wrote to me. I will look for the old detailed memorandum, and if I find it among my mother's few remaining papers I will send it to you without delay; in the meanwhile you can consider his account as correct.

Farewell, my dear father; my Adèle begs you to give her love to her two mothers, and to tell them that Juju and Didine are in excellent health. All is going on well here, and we are all anxious to get Mamma Foucher back.

M. de la Rivière, elementary schoolmaster, lives in the Rue Saint-Jacques, opposite the church of Saint-Jacques-du-Haut-Pas. My best love to you.—Your devoted and dutiful son,

VICTOR.

The King has sent me word that he has ordered some porcelain to be forwarded to me, in addition to all the other marks of his favour. This is the climax.

To LIEUTENANT-GENERAL COUNT HUGO, *at Blois.*

PARIS, 31*st July* 1825.

DEAR PAPA,—For the first time we are sorry to hear that you will soon be coming to Paris; the reason is, that we are leaving it, and you will agree that it is hard to go away just as you are arriving.

Our trip to Switzerland is really coming off; on Tuesday, at 5 o'clock in the morning, we shall be driving along the road to Fontainebleau. I have been suffering a good deal all the week from a stiff neck; but I am better, and the journey will put me quite right again.

What I get from the publishers is more than enough for our journey. They give me 2250 francs for four indifferent odes, which is good pay. I do not think Lamartine will be able to join us; he has just been appointed Secretary of Legation at Florence. Nodier will be of the party.

I thank you for M. de la Rivière; I wrote to tell him of your kind intentions, but I should have been glad if you could have given him something before the 1st of January.

Didine is wonderfully well.

Farewell, my good father; our love to your wife, and much to yourself. — Your dutiful and devoted son,

VICTOR.

TO FATHER AND MOTHER, 1815–1826

PARIS, 10*th October* 1825.

MY DEAR PAPA,—We have now returned to Paris for good. We did nothing but run about here and there all the month of September, and a few days ago we brought our outing to a close with an excursion to Montfort-l'Amaury, a charming little place about thirty miles from Paris, with ruins, woods, and a friend of yours and mine, Colonel Derivoire, who has served under you. I talked a great deal about you with the worthy man, who loves and respects you, and is very anxious to see you. He hopes to pay a visit to Paris the first time you are there.

As the season advances without bringing you, dear papa, we almost despair of having the pleasure of seeing you here this year. M. Lambert, however, had almost promised all your friends that you would come.

It is, unfortunately, impossible for me to do anything for the professor whose letter you send me. I have much less interest than I am credited with, and I have been obliged lately to use the little I may have with the Bishop of Hermopolis to get a scholarship for one of our Trebuchet cousins. I am not even yet sure of success. You understand that all my efforts must be directed to this object, which is of such great importance to our unfortunate Uncle Trebuchet, and that I could not trouble the Minister about another matter without injuring his prospects. One may fall between two stools.

Farewell, dear papa.—Your loving and dutiful son,

VICTOR.

PARIS, *3rd November* 1826.

MY DEAR PAPA,—You see, you have not had to wait long for the news. My Adèle was confined this morning at twenty minutes to five of a healthy boy. My poor darling suffered terribly. I am now writing to you from her bedside; she feels pretty well, but she thinks she is rather feverish, so I beg her not to talk.

Our kind parents will doubtless give a joyful welcome to this new-comer, who will fill the place of the little angel we lost so sadly three years ago. Your happiness adds to ours.

I do not write more to you to-day, dear papa; give our love to your wife; tell all our friends at Blois of the birth of your grandson.

Abel and Mélanie, Pierre Foucher's wife, will be godparents to the baby, whose name we have not yet decided on. He has already taken his food satisfactorily.—Your loving and dutiful son,

VICTOR.

Are you not coming to Paris soon? we shall expect you for the christening; it would be a double fête.

JOURNEY TO REIMS—CORONATION OF CHARLES X.—LETTERS TO ADÈLE HUGO, ETC.

To MONSIEUR J. B. SOULIÉ, *Hotel de Hollande, Rue Neuve des Bons Enfants, Paris.*

[BLOIS, *27th April* 1825, *morning.*]

Do you know, my dear Soulié, that royal favours are being showered on me just as I have come to Blois to rusticate? The King appoints me Knight of the Legion of Honour, and does me the signal honour of inviting me to his Coronation. You who love me will rejoice, and I assure you that the pleasure this news will give you greatly increases my own satisfaction. There is such a community of feeling and opinions between us, that I feel as if my decoration were yours, as yours would be mine.

What enhances the value of this decoration in my eyes is, that I and Lamartine get it together, by a special decree appointing us two only, because, as the King said, it is a question of repairing an omission. These two decorations are over and above those given at the Coronation.

What adds a great charm to my journey to Reims is the hope of making it with our friend Charles Nodier, to whom I wrote yesterday to tell him to arrange so as to travel with me. I must add to all this, that M. de La Rochefoucauld has been charming to Lamartine and me in this matter. It is impossible for anyone to put himself more completely on one side, so as to let the King have all the gratitude, or to show more grace and delicacy in his intercourse with us. It is to him we owe our decorations, and yet it is he who thanks us. I owe this unqualified acknowledgment to a man to whom justice is not always done.

So I am going to see you again, dear friend, and I want this hope to soften the pain of parting from my Adèle for the first time. Tell this news to those of our good friends to whom I shall not have time to write.

The penknife you have sent me is a handsome and excellent one; your drawing is charmingly quaint. A thousand thanks, and, above all, thanks for your sincere and tender friendship.

No one loves you more dearly than I do.

VICTOR.

To MONSIEUR FOUCHER. [1]

LA MILTIÈRE, 12*th May* 1825.

MY DEAR PAPA,—The messenger sent by my father to Blois has come back. He brings us mamma's kind

[1] Mme. Victor Hugo's father.

letter to her Adèle, which we read together, and a very cordial letter from Victor Foucher, which gave us also much pleasure. We expected to receive the cross of the Legion of Honour, and the papers, etc., as well, which you had told us would arrive at the beginning of the week. We have been disappointed in this, and my father-in-law would be glad if you will have the kindness to call once more at the office of the Legion to hasten their despatch. My place is taken for the morning of the 19th; and if we do not receive all these things by the 18th at latest, I should run great risk of not being able to wear my decoration at the Coronation, which would be a breach of good manners.

I feel, my good father, how much trouble I am giving you, and I am most deeply grateful for all your kindness. Mamma Foucher's letter is as kind as herself; it is full of details that interest us. We are as delighted to hear of Juju's progress as of Didine's; when we are back in Paris, we shall have many questions to ask about these children, and much to tell each other about them.

Will you add to all your parental kindness that of paying our taxes, the memo of which has been sent to mamma? We will repay you this small sum.

Mamma tells us that the room at Reims is let for three hundred and fifty francs, and that they are trying to get a fourth person. Is this for the carriage or for the lodging? You told me in your last letter that Beauchène is making my coat. How did he get my measure? I shall no doubt want knee-breeches, stockings, shoes with buckles, steel sword, hat with steel braid and feathers. Of what metal must the buckles of

the knee-breeches and shoes be? Must I have shirt-frills and cuffs?

We are greatly distressed at the bad state of Mlle. Justine's health. Remember us to good Mme. Deschamps. M. Deschamps has written me a delightful letter. Pray thank him for it until I can do so myself.

Aunt Asseline must take care of herself a little; I hope to find her quite well when I see her again. Give our kind regards to her and to her husband.

Paul ought to have received a letter from me to-day, the first I have written from La Miltière. This is the second. I shall write the third to Charles Nodier.

Farewell, my dear good father; papa and his excellent wife, my Adèle and her little chubby-cheeked Didine, send their love to you and Mamma Foucher, in which I cordially join. You would hardly believe how you are being talked about in Sologne just now.—Your tenderly devoted son,

VICTOR.

Has my porter received any letters for me since we left?

I have received a most paternal one from M. de la Rivière.

Continue to write to Blois.

JOURNEY TO REIMS

To MADAME VICTOR HUGO, *care of* GENERAL COUNT HUGO, *Blois.*

ORLÉANS, 19*th May*, 4 P.M.

Here I am at Orléans, my Adèle, and before dining, before taking a rest, even before sitting down (for I am standing up), I must write to you. You will receive this unexpected letter to-morrow, and it is a great joy to me, in the midst of all my depression, to think of the pleasure this sheet will give you. Besides, I am really so sad that it will do me good to open my heart to you, my Adèle. You cannot think how long the time and how great the distance has seemed to me since I left you, my beloved. I feel quite depressed at the thought of the forty miles which already separate you from me, and of the eight hours which have passed without seeing you. How will it be to-morrow, and the day after to-morrow, and the next day, and the next? You must really pray to God, my Adèle, my dearly-beloved Adèle, to give me courage, for indeed I need it, and this fortnight is an eternity to me.

But I see that instead of strengthening you it is I who am weak, and that I am saddening instead of consoling you. Forgive me, my Adèle; it is a terrible thing to be alone, isolated, with cold, curious, or indifferent faces around one, with no friend but one's purse, as I am now, when one has got into the sweet habit of finding your tender smile and your consoling glance everywhere.

I shall be in Paris to-morrow, and I will write to you

at once. Be brave, my adored one; take great care of your little Didine, who is not a greater angel than you are; see that she has cut two or three teeth by my return; kiss her a thousand times. My love to my good father and his excellent wife; I will give the same messages in your name at the same time in Paris.

We had a very good journey here. The roads are first-rate, the weather fine though cold. I shall not be hot to-night, but I shall think of you, and that will keep me warm.

Write to me to Paris from to-morrow; I will send you my Reims address from Paris. How trying all these honours are! Many people envy me this journey; and they little know how unhappy I am over the good fortune which excites their jealousy.

Farewell, dear angel, farewell; my Adèle, take care of yourself. I embrace you very tenderly from very far off. Do not cry and spoil your pretty cheeks. I want to find them fresh and rosy on my return.

Tell my good father that I was asked on the journey *if I was going to join my regiment*, etc. This was on account of my ribbon.

Once more farewell, and once more a thousand kisses and caresses.—Your own

VICTOR.

Open my letters should any come for me, and give me a brief summary of their contents. Farewell, farewell once more.

JOURNEY TO REIMS

PARIS, *Friday, 20th May*, 7.30 A.M.

You will not have read my first letter, my beloved Adèle, by the time that I am beginning a second one to you. Here I am in Paris; I breakfasted with your dear parents, whom I found just the same as ever, taking as much care of me here, as mine do of you down there. I still have the sound of the diligence in my ears, I am bruised and stunned by its jolting, still I have no difficulty in collecting my thoughts to write to you; they are all merged in one, and that is you, and always you, and only you! You were the companion of my sleepless night, you amused me during the monotonous and insipid talk on the journey; you gave me the strength of mind to part from you, and you will keep up my courage during this never-ending absence. Do not read all I write to you to anyone but our dear parents; others might think our grief ridiculous, and it is no use making them laugh at what gives us pain.

Our journey went off well, though all the arrangements for my places had been so badly made, that I always found myself where I ought not to have been, thanks to the stupidity of the innkeeper's wife at Blois. I feel no ill effects from the cold, and hardly any from the fatigue, but my depression and *ennui* have not left me, and are increasing. If I do get an inspiration at the Coronation, it will not be from my cheerful Muse.

I find a lot of letters, parcels, papers, books, etc., here. I enclose you Soumet's letter; it will please both you and my good father. Take great care of it. I found most kind congratulations from Villemain *dated April 27th*; he

invites me to dine with him on the 1st of *last May*, and begs me not to fail him. So you see, he has had to wait some time for me. I will write to him and explain the reason of my absence and my silence, and I will call on him.

Now I must leave you, my adored angel, for I have a thousand and one things to attend to. I must begin my visits. I gave your letter to your kind mother, who sends you and your Didine many loving kisses, but not as many as I do. Your good father joins us in this; he is still cheerful, cordial, and amusing, like mine, though in a different manner. Give my love to my noble and charming father, and to her who is *one flesh* and one heart with him. I commend you to their loving care. You must be on even better terms with them than with me. They are so kind that this will be no difficulty to them.

I am writing to you from our bedroom, where everything makes me feel my widowhood more acutely. Everything seems strange to me here without you. Coming into Paris, I admired it like a provincial. It seemed as if it were not my own country. You are my true home. Write to me every day.—Your own

VICTOR.

Write me one letter here, and all the rest Poste Restante, Reims. I dine with Mlle. Duvidal on Sunday; she is touching up the little picture, and working at Juju's portrait. Juju has grown prettier. Ask papa to write to Victor Foucher to thank him for sending his book. A few kind words will suffice.

JOURNEY TO REIMS

PARIS, 21*st May*.

This is my only happy time throughout the day, my Adèle. I am going to talk to you and forget for a moment all my troubles, fatigues, worries, and difficulties. You are with me in my mind, and nothing can distract my thoughts from you. You will see this sheet, you will touch it, it will be with you twelve or thirteen days in advance of me, it will be like a messenger of whom you will ask a thousand questions. I envy it!

Well, I have been here since yesterday morning, and I will tell you how I have spent my time. When I arrived I found your father and mother still in bed. Paul threw his arms round me, and then all the questions began. We had breakfast, your father made me some lobster sauce, the coffee and milk were excellent. After breakfast I wrote you the letter which you will get today. As I returned from posting it *myself*, Mlle. Julie was going upstairs to see me. I dressed and went down to her studio, where the questions began again. How is Adèle? and Didine? and the General? and his wife? The good woman is as fond of us as if we belonged to her. She showed me Didine's portrait, which is nearly finished and is delightful; and Juju's, which she has begun on a large canvas. I think she will do a small one to match the other, at least so your mother tells me. Juju's is a very good likeness, and very pretty. Her round face has grown longer, and she looks quite the little woman. Coming away from Mlle. Duvidal (with whom we dine on Sunday), I went on foot to see Beauchêne. Destains and Jules Maréchal congratulated me.

Beauchêne showed me my coat, which fits well; it is very ugly, but very fashionable. I have still to get my knee-breeches made, to hire or buy a sword. There were so many people at M. de la Rochefoucauld's that I did not go in there. Abel was at Beauchêne's shop. I gave my good old brother everybody's love. He is always driving about in pursuit of the six millions, which he hopes to get. Then I went to see Soumet, who is, as you know, always good and kind; he offered to lend me his knee-breeches. He came back with me by the Tuileries as far as the beginning of the Rue du Bac. I went to get my pension at the Home Office, where I was congratulated on my decoration. After that I went to see Adolphe and Mme. Duménil, neither of whom was at home. I have ordered a pair of boots, a pair of shoes, and a pair of pumps, which I shall have by Sunday evening. Coming home I looked in on our porter, who told that the Abbé Lamennais had called among others. I must not forget to tell you that I have also seen Rabbe, who gave me heaps of kind and affectionate messages for you and our dear parents at Blois. Abel and Beauchêne dined with us. After dinner I refused to go to the theatre with your people. It would have been too sad without you. I have been to see Charles Nodier. Our poor friend has just lost his mother-in-law. All the house was draped in black. Still I tried to cheer the ladies, although I am not very merry myself. Our good Nodier, who knew I was coming, had been expecting me all day, first at lunch and then at dinner. He is short of money, like me. It appears we shall not receive any before the journey. We start Tuesday

morning with the artist Alaux. The carriage there and back will cost 400 francs. If we can get Taylor's room we shall have it for nothing. If not we must take what we can get, and we shall have to pay what we are asked. I hear we shall be in a very good position for seeing the ceremony. Our places, they say, are perhaps the best of all. The journey will only take two days, and we shall arrive early on Wednesday. I am to go and see Nodier again on Monday morning and take him my things.

I got home last night at eleven o'clock, after having been to the play to fetch your mother. I slept last night from sheer fatigue, and I saw you in all my dreams. It was a sad night to me, for it is the first I have passed away from you, in a strange bed. This morning I have just seen our good friend the Abbé Lamennais, who is still taken up with his wretched troubles. He asked most affectionately after you, talked to me a great deal of Didine, and was as delightful as he always is. I shall see M. de la Rochefoucauld to-day. I shall order my knee-breeches. And, to do all this, I am obliged to finish this letter. Your poor aunt is very ill. M. and Mme. Deschamps, M. and Mme. François, send you and our dear parents all sorts of kind messages.

If the Viscount does not give me any money, your father will lend me some, and can repay himself when it is sent to me.

Farewell, dear Adèle, farewell, beloved; what a pang it gives me to close my letter so soon! When shall I receive one from you?

Your kind parents are particularly attentive to me.

They send their love to you, to your Didine and to my parents. Tell my good father not to overtire himself with head work, and to go out walking. My love to your Blois father and mother. You know how I love you. Farewell for to-day.

PARIS, *22nd May*, 12.30 P.M.

I come in depressed and sad as usual, and I find your letter of the 19th of May. What a pleasure! but how is it, my beloved Adèle, that I have nothing later than the 19th? Your letter must have been posted on the 20th and should have arrived yesterday. I ought to have had one of the 20th to-day. Do you realise that we have been parted for four days and three nights? What an age it seems! and how I long to hear all you have been doing during all this endless time that I have been away from you! How lonely I am, now that you are no longer there! What courage we have had, dearest, and must still have! You should now be receiving my third letter, and I have had only one from you! Only, see how unlucky I am! I still hope to receive one to-morrow; after that I shall have no happiness till the 26th, the day we arrive at Reims. You know we start the day after to-morrow, Tuesday morning. At Reims I hope to find a big packet of your sweet and tender letters, which do me so much good, and of which your loving heart alone has the secret.

Keep poor Augustine, my Adèle; you are right, it is

doing a kind action, in which your good mother at Blois will be glad to join you. Keep this poor orphan; we will take her with us, as she is so devoted and grateful. These qualities are too rare to go unrewarded. Later on we will arrange matters as best as we can. Keep her, but tell her all she owes to you, to make her zealous and careful.

Do not worry, but do not restrain yourself. If you want to cry, do so. Tears which are checked do harm, those which flow freely do good. I only wish I knew how to weep. But my heart is always sore, because my eyes are always dry.

Your kind parents continue to be most attentive to me. Thank mine for me. Tell my good father it is just like him, keeping that bottle of wine for drinking my health. Tell his wife that everyone here loves her, and that they are quite right. We are always talking of Blois; speaking of my father yesterday, Mlle. Duvidal said there was nothing in the world nobler or more worthy of respect than an old soldier who had gained his promotion by great deeds and distinguished talents. That is my opinion too, but I was glad to hear it come from this generous and elevated mind. I was delighted to hear my father spoken of as I speak of him myself, as I shall always speak of him, and as posterity will speak of him.

I now return to my diary. I saw M. de la Rochefoucauld yesterday; he was very amiable, and told me to come and see him at Reims. Our fourth travelling companion will be M. de Cailleux. He says he is taking this journey in order to be with me. I wanted to see

the Minister for War; but he was in the Chamber. His secretary will give me the information that I wanted to get from him. From the War Office the cab drove me to my tailor, of whom I ordered my knee-breeches. Passing by the Palais-Royal I saw Ladvocat, who is already trying to get my coming Ode. Even if I do write one, I do not know what I shall do with it. My third edition is getting on, but is delayed by the engravings. I went to see Villemain. His mother offered me a window for you on the line of the King's route. Alas! dearest, how this offer saddened me. I finished the day's business by a visit to my printer, who is still busy over the title and the cover. I fear I shall not be able to bring back the third edition to Blois. Ladvocat wants to publish the Ode at the same time separately, with notes, preface and all the rest of it. He would get it inserted in instalments in all the papers, which are now, he tells me, very well disposed towards me. Here are plans for you! If only they do not delay my return, that is all I ask of a kind Providence, and I hope it may be so.

When I came back your father gave me a note for a thousand francs, which he borrowed from one of his friends. So now I am in funds again. Biscarrat dined with us, and in the evening we played our usual Saturday game of écarté with MM. Paulin, François, Carlies, etc. How dull all that is!

This morning I paid a visit to our flat, where everything is in capital order. I saw Mme. Dévéria. Her sons were not at home, and I left all my father's stars, etc., with them. So now that is all arranged. M. Louis

Dutes brought me his father's sword, which has a very handsome hilt. But before I can wear it I must have the scabbard and belt altered. Would it be best to do that or to hire or buy one? It is difficult to combine smartness with economy. For I must be economical; it is not my money. I shall, however, be obliged to change the buttons on the coat that Beauchêne has just sent me.

I no longer feel fatigued, but I am still depressed. This is a complaint that will last another twelve days. I must make the best of it. But how difficult it is to live without you, my darling Adèle, even for a few days!

Farewell, all goes on as usual here. Everyone sends you their love. Kiss my Didine a thousand times.

Your letter is sweet; go on writing to me always. I kissed the place you had kissed and where your tears had fallen.

Good-bye, my angel. I fear my letter to-morrow will be very short. To-morrow I must pack and get my luggage put on the carriage. I have an appointment with Lamennais at ten o'clock, and with Nodier at eleven. Dévéria will come at nine. I shall get up early to write to you, if François will leave me free in the morning. Farewell, my Adèle; farewell, my Didine.

I need not tell you to give my love to our dear parents; that is a matter of course.

23rd May, 1 P.M.

I am writing to you, my own Adèle, on Nodier's table and with his pen. I have just had breakfast with this true friend and with Rabbe and Soulié, who sends you a carnation, also with Taylor, who is drawing something for you. Our plans are now settled. We start at six o'clock to-morrow morning. Don't be uneasy; all will be ready—the suit, shirt-frills, under-linen, sword, etc. I dined with Mlle. Julie yesterday, as it was her birthday. We drank your health. My own Adèle! how I love you! I have still a thousand things to see to. I must pack. Farewell. Kiss my Didine on her sunburnt cheeks, kiss her a thousand times. My love to our dear parents at Blois. I kissed your letter a thousand times. How precious it is to me! What a beautiful letter! How full it is of regret and tenderness! I shall get another to-day, I hope, and I am now going home to find it. Farewell, farewell, I am still sad.—Your own

VICTOR.

I hope to write to you to-morrow on the journey. Farewell, my adored angel. ✓

PARIS, *24th May.*

It is five o'clock in the morning, my beloved angel. In an hour I shall have left Paris, and I cannot

leave it without writing to you once more. I am tearing a leaf out of my travelling pocket-book, which will return to Blois sooner than it expected. That is a happiness I cannot look forward to. This does not mean that I shall not be back by the time we hoped. Above all, do not worry.

You are asleep at this moment, my own Adèle; but at least be with me in your dreams. I do not know how much pleasure my letters give you, but why have you been so chary of yours? I might have had one yesterday; why did I not get it? I must postpone this pleasure till I get to Reims, and I can now only have any happiness in going still farther away from you.

Reims! I hardly know what I shall do then. Can I think of aught else but my absent Adèle who is thinking of me?

Give me plenty of details about Blois. I tell you everything I have the time to write about. The rest must wait for our long talks together. Mlle. Duvidal dined with us yesterday, and we drank to my Adèle and her Didine. Mlle. Zoé, who is charming, and whom I love because she loves you, made me up a collar, and begged me to tell you she was taking your place (but of course only in this). In the evening I took my things to Nodier's house, and I am going back there now; we start from there. When I come back I will bring you the famous English translation of *Han d'Islande* with Cruikshanks' admirable etchings. They are not pleasing, but they are terrible.

Farewell, Adèle; so I am off on my travels again. What is the good of travelling? Have I not found my

happiness? On what planet, in what sphere, should I find an angel like you?

Farewell, a thousand caresses to you and my Didine; tell her from me she must not cry at night.—
Your own VICTOR.

You ought to receive a letter every day. I will always try to arrange for this. Still you must remember I shall be travelling for two days. We shall not arrive till the day after to-morrow. We shall sleep on the road.

Everyone here sends love to you, and begs you to give the same to your father and mother on the banks of the Loire.

VILLERS-COTTERETS, 25*th May*, 7 A.M.

I wrote to you yesterday, my own Adèle, on Nodier's paper and table, to-day I write to you on the paper and at the desk of our charming fellow-traveller Cailleux. We are at Villers-Cotterets, where we have arrived after a drive of two hours and a half. We spent the night on four improvised beds in the village of Létignon, and had to pay nineteen francs for this bad lodging and some bad soup. Nodier is not very well, and since yesterday Alaux complains of constant nausea; they are, however, always kind and cheerful; M. de Cailleux and I are the only ones who keep well. The prices of everything are exorbitant on the road. Everything is crowded. The

inns are filled to overflowing with travellers, and the roads with carriages. The latest comers get even less than the bones. It is like a flight of locusts devouring everything. But do not be anxious, dearest; our decorations, our four manly voices, and our good appearance will, with the help of God and our purses, procure us all we want.

My delight at approaching Reims is indescribable. I shall find letters there from my beloved Adèle. What joy!

Farewell, my adored one. I have only half an hour in which to write to you and to breakfast. I should like to give up breakfast, and spend all the time in writing to you, but my friends are waiting for me. How sad it is for me, my beloved Adèle, to be away from you, for I have now no pleasure left but that of writing to you. I hardly know what I am writing. My heart is full. Farewell. All our friends drink your health, and Charles Nodier, our good friend Charles, bids me give you his warmest regards, and his best respects to my kind father. My best love to him, as well as to his wife, whose motherly care makes up for mine. I send you a thousand kisses. Farewell, beloved. Kiss papa's little pet on both her cheeks.—Your own VICTOR.

REIMS, *27th May*, 7 A.M.

Where shall I begin, my beloved?—with the delight your letters gave me, or with my arrival at Reims? You

are very anxious to hear all the details of my journey, and I am most impatient to tell you how happy your letters have made me amid all my depression. Each time I open one of your letters, my own Adèle, I tremble with hope and fear. At one o'clock yesterday afternoon we got to our lodgings at Reims, and, without even waiting till my trunks were brought up, I ran to the Post Office. There I found your third letter. I was much distressed to see that you had not received my letter of the 21st by the 23rd, for I had given a franc to a messenger to take it to the General Post Office, which was cleared earlier on account of Whitsuntide. I explain this to you, dearest, lest you should think it possible for me to remain a day without writing to you. This piece of ill fortune happened to me yesterday, and it tortured me all day. I wanted to write to you from Thoméry during breakfast, but we had hardly time to snatch a morsel, and besides I wished to wait for your letters, which I expected to find at Reims. I have been wanting to write to you every minute since we got here, but the endless matters of business and duties which take up every moment here have hardly left me breathing space. I hoped to write to you before going to bed, but we all four share the same room; we all go to bed at the same hour, and not one of us would take the liberty of keeping his candle alight.

Besides, fancy the untidiness of these four beds, of all the luggage of four men strewn about in a room about two-thirds the size of your room at Blois. But I have not lost any time; the post had gone when we arrived, and this letter will reach you as soon as if it had been

written yesterday. I am vexed at this delay, for my own sake only; I should so like to have combined the pleasure of reading a letter from you with that of writing one to you. How delighted I am to hear about Didine, my own Adèle—so she has a tooth, and it has come through without pain! Kiss her a thousand times, and tell her papa is much pleased with her conduct on this occasion, and that he will bring back some nice biscuits from Reims for mamma, which will make her milk taste all the sweeter. Tell Augustine to go on serving you well, and I shall be pleased with her. Now I will go on with the details of our journey. We dined at Soissons yesterday; it is one of the prettiest towns in France, in a delightful valley, and with two splendid churches. One, the Cathedral, has been restored—that is to say, shamefully mutilated. The other, the church of Saint-Jean, was ruined during the Revolution. It still has two magnificent spires, and the remains of cloisters the destruction of which is greatly to be deplored. One is sorry to be a Frenchman when one sees such profanation committed by Frenchmen on French monuments. On leaving Soissons we rearranged the luggage on the carriage. My portmanteau, which is an old one, had been put on its side and the screws had given way; it had come open, and so had the box with my cross, and the ornaments it contained were tumbling about outside it. We thought everything was spoilt. But I got off with a little dust in the portmanteau and a few scratches on my two medals, which had been rubbing against each other. This does not diminish the value of the gold medal, and M. de Cailleux undertakes to make everything right

by having the medal re-struck. We slept at Braine, a pretty, well-built village, which has another ruined church as fine as the Abbey at Jumièges, the drawings of which you have seen in Nodier's *Voyage Pittoresque*. Leaving Braine at half-past three yesterday morning we reached Reims at one o'clock. There another accident happened. Nodier's trunk had given way; all his things got covered with dust, and he lost three collars, whereupon we said, "Pity the man who travels without his wife." On arriving I went to the Post and the Diligence Office, and found your letters, my sword, and my knee-breeches. I read your letters with rapture during a heavy shower, which I hardly noticed. I arrived at the front of the Cathedral without looking up, and I had been there ten minutes before I saw it. I was reading your letter, my beloved! Nodier et M. Emmin, the deputy for Besançon and a friend of his, joined me there. We dined together at the "Grand Hotel du Sacre." M. Emmin, who is a charming fellow-countryman, treated us, so we shall have to give a him dinner in return. Everything is terribly expensive. After dinner we had to go to the play. What a nuisance! There I met our good friend Beauchêne, who I like to talk to you about. We got home at eleven, went to bed at midnight, got up at six, and I am writing to you first on Cailleux's desk and then (at this moment) on M. de la Rochefoucauld's bureau, whom I came to see, and who is out.

He is just coming in; I must finish this letter. Farewell, my own Adèle; embrace your kind parents. Tell my father Nodier wants to see him a Peer of France, and says that this honour must be con-

ferred on so worthy a man. If only Nodier were King! Farewell again, dear angel; I embrace you in the way you know so well, just as I kiss your adorable letters.

We leave on the 31st. Write to me at Paris after the 28th. Farewell once more, and one more kiss.

I will soon write to my father.

REIMS, *27th May*, 3.45 P.M.

What a disappointment, my own Adèle—no letter to-day! In your last letter you scold me a little. It was not my fault. Nor do I suppose you are to blame for this delay, but, whatever has caused it, I am much distressed. Just imagine with what impatience I look forward to a letter from you in my loneliness, and what a blank I feel when I have been to the post in vain. All the pleasure of the day is at an end for me; I have but one comfort left, and that is to read your dear letters over and over again, and kiss them a thousand times; I have not the courage to tell you about the Cathedral, and what I have admired or criticised in it. Good-bye for to-day, my beloved! My letter would be too sad, and you are quite sad enough already! I will write more to-morrow. I shall then be nearer to receiving a letter from you, and therefore less miserable.

28*th*, 9 A.M.

I slept very badly last night, so I was dozing this morning, and consequently did not get up till rather late. My companions wanted to take me to the Abbey of Saint-Rémy, but I have to write to you, and, in spite of their entreaties, I will pour out my heart to yours. Shall I get any news of you to-day, my darling Adèle? I must have some, I want two letters. Failing this, I shall think you are ill, for I will not believe you are careless; of course you feel as I do: your health may alter, but not your love. Is it not true, darling, that you love me, and that I shall get two more letters to-day to put next my heart? I must have that hope to go on with this letter.

Well, I went to look at the Cathedral yesterday. It is an admirable monument of Gothic architecture. The western front, the rose-window, and the towers make a wonderful effect. Charles and I spent a quarter of an hour looking at the arch of one door; a year would be required to examine and admire everything. The interior as it is now is far less imposing than it was in its old simplicity. The old granite has been painted blue, the severe style of the sculpture has been disfigured with gilding and tinsel. Still, the mistake made at Saint-Denis has been avoided here. The ornaments like the Cathedral, are Gothic, and everything is in pretty good taste excepting the throne, which, absurdly enough, is in the Corinthian style. The general effect is satisfying to the eye, and a good deal of thought about the arrangement of the edifice is necessary to see that

complete advantage has not been taken of it. Such as it is, this ornamentation shows what progress romantic ideas have made. Six months ago the old church of the Franks would have been made into a Greek temple.

We spend our days in going about and our evenings at the play; we cannot escape this, as we lodge in the house of the director of the theatre. Everything was dear enough when we arrived, and prices are rising, and will rise still higher. Yesterday lunch and dinner for us four cost eighty-one francs. An omelette costs fifteen francs, a dish of peas thirteen, five rolls forty-two sous, etc. etc.

I have seen Agier and Chazet. I have not yet met the Vicomte de la Rochefoucauld, nor the Minister of War. The King is to arrive to-day at noon. Our companion Alaux has painted a very fine picture, which will grace the banqueting-hall.

Our friends are most agreeable. I gave Nodier the medal I got as member of the Academy of the Floral Games—he much wishes to be a member himself; and Cailleux, who is appointed Officer of the Legion of Honour, has given me his small Knight's cross, which is charming. I shall introduce you to them all in Paris, and also to our deputy Emmin, who is quite prepared to like you, and whom you will like very much. He drank your health yesterday.

Thank your kind mother Mme. Hugo, my Adèle, for the little frock she has given Didine. I was much touched by this. How does the little pet's tooth get on?

Best love to our kind parents. Farewell, my adored Adèle; now my letters will be shorter and less frequent; the Coronation takes place to-morrow. Only love me, and do not be anxious about anything. I shall very soon see you again. I think one could almost die of such happiness. Farewell, my angel!

REIMS, *27th May*

We have seen the Coronation, my Adèle; it is an entrancing ceremony. Alaux is going to make you a present, for which you will thank him as much as you love me: he is sending you my portrait, which Nodier considers very clever. You must thank this new but worthy friend very warmly; I need not commend the portrait to you. Farewell, beloved. No time for more. I expect two letters from you to-morrow; I did not get one to-day, and I was sad all day. I hope you are less so. The day for my return draws nearer and nearer. Many kisses for you and my Didine.—Your own VICTOR.

28th May, 3 P.M.

What I am about to write to you, my Adèle, is for yourself alone. I have just read your two letters; they have made me very unhappy. I do not care for Reims

any longer, I am on thorns. What, you are left alone, alone in your isolation! They are inattentive and cold to my beloved Adèle, and this in my father's house! I am not angry, darling; I am grieved, deeply grieved. Knowing as I do your sweet temper and my father's unbounded kindness, I am astounded at what is going on. You have the right not only to kindness and attention, but to paternal tenderness and solicitude, to more perhaps than you receive from me. My poor dear father! if he could but look into my heart at this moment, he would see what intense pain is mingling with my infinite devotion to him and my deep love for you. I shall write to him as soon as I have time; but do not be uneasy, my letter will be skilful enough to avoid wounding his feelings, and yet make him see it all. There! I am dreadfully distressed, but you have the consolation, have you not, of my love, which is such as you deserve; it is respectful and tender as that felt for angels, it is infinite and eternal.

Farewell for to-day, my beloved; I am too depressed to tell you that the King has just entered Reims, that M. de la Rochefoucauld expects me this evening, that I shall have to be up at three o'clock to-morrow morning, that I am tired with running about all day. All this has lost its interest for me. I am sad, sadder than ever. But make yourself easy, we will put this right. Your Victor, your husband, your protector is coming back, and then you will have all you want. If this continues for a quarter of an hour only, we will go back to our own home and forget everything, except my father's kindness.—Your own VICTOR.

6 P.M.

Get into the habit of numbering and carefully dating your letters, as I do; I have sometimes to guess at the time when they were written; and you must know, my darling Adèle, how sweet it is to say to oneself, *at the moment I was doing so and so, she was writing!* Besides, I have only received four letters as yet, and I think I ought to have had more; if your letters were numbered, I should be certain about it. Don't think I am blaming you, my adored angel; if I do find fault, it is very tenderly, and it will please you. Oh! my Adèle, how I love you!

Since I received your two letters, I can think of nothing else. I thought I was so sure of your being properly treated. It seemed to me that my absence would make this a sacred duty. Thank Mme. Brousse very much for her friendliness, which I much appreciate, as it comforts you, and also for the attentions she pays you which should come from another person. Do not worry, however. Of what consequence to you is the good or bad humour of a stranger on whom you are not and never will be dependent? Love my kind father well, who loves you so much! Above all, my Adèle, pour out your heart to me, tell me everything. My Didine is a hundred times dearer to me, as she is a consolation to you; kiss her a thousand times on her sweet little mouth, which is not fresher than yours.

I have just seen Sosthène, who is always very agreeable He has given me the private entrée. He told me the King had asked if I was here. I am

nervous about what they expect of me. My head is suffering, and my heart is so sad. How can I compose anything for a joyful occasion? Our friends, and especially Nodier, send you their kindest regards. Farewell, beloved; I kiss you on your eyes, so that they may not weep any more.

REIMS, 30*th May*.

My kind father will explain to you, dearest, the all-important reasons which compel me to take you with me to Paris directly I return to Blois, which will be, I hope, on the morning of the 3rd.

Thank my good and worthy father very much, and be ready. No time for more. I won't say farewell, beloved. I leave Reims to-morrow the 31st.—Your own VICTOR.

To MADAME FOUCHER, *at Paris*.

REIMS, 31*st May* 1825.

MY DEAR MAMMA,—We leave Reims this morning, after having seen all the splendid Coronation ceremonies. I shall be with you the day after to-morrow morning, the 2nd of June, about noon, and I shall start off again for Blois the same day at six, if there is room in the coach.

As I have many matters to attend to, and above all the Ode that I must write, I shall doubtless return to Paris at once, bringing Adèle and Didine with me. My presence there is absolutely necessary.

Besides, we shall not complain of a circumstance which brings us back sooner to our kind family in Paris.

Farewell, my dear mamma; best love to our kind father, and believe in the tender and dutiful affection of your son,

VICTOR.

To MADAME VICTOR HUGO, *care of* GENERAL COUNT HUGO, *at Blois.*

REIMS, 31*st May* 1825.

We are just starting, my Adèle; in two days I shall be in Paris, and in three at Blois. What joy to see you again! There are many drawbacks to this joy: we must leave Blois at once, and I was looking forward to six weeks' rest there. But a number of very important reasons oblige us to make this sacrifice. So get everything ready for our departure.

I have just seen Roger, who is here as deputy. He has helped me greatly about getting to Blois at once, provided the seats are not all taken. But he cannot give us any places for the return journey; the only chance would be if the mail happened to be empty, and we cannot take them from Bordeaux, as several towns

on the road have a prior right to the seats, in case the coach is empty.

I have also just seen M. de Chateaubriand off. I was the *only one* to do so.

The ceremony of conferring the royal orders took place yesterday; it is a fine sight. The dress of the Knights is magnificent. I will describe it all to you later, beloved.

I shall have much more to tell you that I cannot write about, but in three days! . . . How slowly these three days will pass!

I warn you once more that the coach called "La Pompe" is detestable. See if there are many travellers by the "Grandes Messageries," and if there are, then in that case only take the three front places in "La Pompe."

Farewell, my adored angel; if anything should happen to prevent my arriving at Blois the morning of the 3rd, as I hope to do, don't be anxious; the reason will be that the mail was full. Besides, I may have time to send you a few lines again. A thousand loving kisses. —Your own

VICTOR.

Tell our parents how grateful we are to them, till I can do so myself. Tell my father that I talked about him a great deal yesterday with a deputy of the Doubs, M. Emmin, who is a friend of Baroness Deléley, my godmother.

And how is my Didine?

LETTERS TO MONSIEUR SAINTE-BEUVE.

To MONSIEUR SAINTE-BEUVE, 94 *Rue de Vaugirard.*

Thursday, 8th February [1827].

I read Monsieur de Sainte-Beuve some lines of my *Cromwell* the other morning. If he is inclined to hear any more of it, he has only to come on Monday evening, *before eight o'clock*, to my father-in-law's house, Rue du Cherche-Midi. Everyone will be delighted to see him, myself especially. He is one of those listeners whom I should always choose, because I like to hear them talk.—
His most devoted VICTOR HUGO.

A line in reply, please.

Saturday [*middle of February* 1827].[1]

Come at once, dear sir, and let me thank you for the beautiful lines which you have allowed me to see.

[1] *Note by Sainte-Beuve:* "After first seeing my verses."

TO MONSIEUR SAINTE-BEUVE

I want to tell you, besides, that I guessed you were a poet; not so much, perhaps, from your articles, which are so remarkable, as from your conversation and your expression. So you must pardon me for being somewhat proud of my penetration, and let me congratulate myself on having instinctively divined a gift of so high an order. Pray come; I have so much to say to you, or let me know where I could meet you.—Your friend,

V. H.

To MONSIEUR DE SAINTE-BEUVE (*very urgent*).

Wednesday evening [1827].

Here, dear friend, is a letter I have just received from the *Album*. If you still have the same views with regard to the *Globe*, you can send direct to M. Folleville, whose address is on the letter. They are and will be delighted.—My warmest thanks, il vuestro hermano,

VICTOR.

To MONSIEUR SAINTE-BEUVE, *Tubney Lodge, near Oxford, England.*

PARIS, *17th September* 1828.[1]

Your two letters, my dear friend, were a great pleasure to me. I own I had fallen into the pleasant habit of

[1] *Note by Sainte-Beuve:* "During my stay in England, 1828."

seeing you often, of exchanging ideas with you, of occasionally meditating on the harmony of your poetry; your absence caused a great blank in my life. It made the street of Notre-Dame-des-Champs seem almost empty to me. Your two letters, so kind and so charming, have brought us back something of your lively and elevated conversation, of the poetry of your heart and mind.

I cannot tell you with what eager curiosity I followed you on your journey. Every detail in your letters was most interesting to me. I could see the bas-reliefs standing out and the Gothic windows gleaming in the fine churches you have visited, lucky man that you are!

While you are thus rushing from one new sensation to another, one day is like another for us. You know our mode of life; only, we have been deprived of our sunsets for some time. The sun sets now at dinner-time, and I am sorry for this. It is the first thing which the approach of winter steals away from me.

I wish I could send you some news from here, but you know what a solitary life I lead. I know that Ancelot has just had his play *Olga* performed, and the *Globe* speaks well of it. There has also been a stupid article in the *Globe* by M. C—— R—— on your fine work. On the other hand, the *Provincial* has said some rather pleasant things about you, which I am keeping for your return.

We have talked a great deal about you with all our friends. Your ears must have tingled. Not a line has been heard in my hermit's cell but has made me long for your poetry. I hope you will bring us some from England to console us for this long privation.

TO MONSIEUR SAINTE-BEUVE

I told your mother yesterday that you would soon be back. She begged me to tell you that she was quite well, and was longing to embrace you. Not more so than we are, I'll be bound, although she is your mother.

I will not say good-bye, dear friend; come back to us soon. I advise you to see Canterbury: the Cathedral will charm you and rouse your enthusiasm. I am distressed at what you say about the *restorations* at Westminster. The English have a mania for combining the *fashionable* with Gothic.

We shall soon meet.—We all send our kind love to you.

VICTOR.

M. Leprévost, who will be delighted to see you, lives in the Rue Fontenelle at Rouen. We are expecting Lamartine here. Paul, Boulanger, the two Dévérias, David (who is not going to London), send you their love and thanks.

Sunday (midnight) [1829].[1]

When I came in, dear friend, I found your valuable manuscript. I have just read it; and I write this, not to tell you my feelings on reading it—words could hardly do that—but to put on paper a few of the impressions made on me by your serious and beautiful lines, your masculine,

[1] *Note by Sainte-Beuve:* "After sending him the manuscript of *Vie de Joseph Delorme.*"

simple, and pathetic prose, and your character of Joseph Delorme, who is yourself. The short and stern story, the analysis of a young life, the masterly dissection which lays bare a soul, are all admirable, and almost moved me to tears. What a splendid contribution to art!

I shall try to go and see you to-morrow.—Your brother

VICTOR.

To MONSIEUR SAINTE-BEUVE, *Poste Restante, Reims.*

PARIS, *2nd November* 1829.[1]

Your truly kind letter of the 25th has arrived, dear friend, and has given us much pleasure and much pain. So neither you nor Boulanger have received the letters my wife addressed to you Poste Restante at Strasburg? There is a fatality in all this. Hardly had you both started when that wretched internal inflammation which you know I suffer from begins, ascends into my head, and settles in my eyes. So there I am, blind—shut up for whole days in my study, with blinds down, shutters fastened, doors closed, unable to work or read or write, and having neither of you with me—*lumen ademptum.* On the top of all this your first letter (from Dijon) arrives, then one from Boulanger, five minutes after. Imagine my delight! My wife reads and re-reads them

[1] *Note by Sainte-Beuve:* "During my journey on the Rhine while I was writing *Consolations.*"

both to me. You neither of you told us where to write to you. We wait for the next letters; they reach us (from Besançon); I was still unable to use my eyes. You told us to reply to Strasburg. My wife undertakes this, almost glad that the state of my eyes gave her the privilege of writing to you. The two letters, each of four pages, composed by us both—partly dictated by me, partly arranged by her—the two letters, full of our affection and our grief, imploring you to return, go off addressed Strasburg, Poste Restante; this address was written very legibly, and you do not receive them! And yet neither Latouche nor Janin are postmen! What must you have thought, dear friend! What an impression this silence must have made on you, after letters like yours! You probably made allowance for my laziness, my engagements, etc. As if laziness or business could interfere with writing to you. It must have annoyed you a good deal; perhaps I am mistaken, but it seems to me that your third letter (from Worms), kind, good, and perfect as it is, is colder than the other two. I cannot tell you, dear friend, how the idea of this worries me, and how I long for this letter to be at Reims, and you too. So you have heard nothing of our ideas or of our grief during your journey! You have not known how your absence has filled all our thoughts here, how much we have talked of you, thought of you, that there have been no enjoyable evenings in Rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs since you left, no chats on the sofa or at the fireside, that we have missed you in everything! And you were ignorant of all this, you my two dearest friends! And if you did guess something of it, the ridiculous break

in our correspondence at Strasburg intervened to put your affection at fault and make you doubt mine. Is not this trying? So now make haste to get to Reims and read what I am now writing!

However, you have brought me good luck again. My sight came back to me with your third letter. It is the first thing I have read since your departure; and this letter, with one to Boulanger, is the first thing I have written. I only wish it were less dull. Yours delight us, and we read them over and over again. They are a charming diary of your travels, combined with kind and affectionate thoughts of us.

Alas! my good friend, with the exception of your letters, nothing pleasant whatever has come to me from outside for the last three weeks. The outlook is gloomy in every direction. It is as if our early days of struggle and strife had come back. Those wretches Janin and Latouche are posted in every newspaper, and from this vantage pour out their envy, their rage, and their hatred. They caused a fatal desertion from our ranks at the critical moment. The old school, which was almost extinct, has resumed the offensive. A terrible storm is gathering over my head, and the hatred of these low journalists has reached such a point that they no longer give me credit for anything. In spite of this, *Othello* has been a success, though not a tremendous one, but as great as could be expected, and thanks to our efforts. My behaviour on this occasion has quite brought Alfred de Vigny and the Shakespeareans back to our side; that is one good thing, at anyrate, but a double cabal is being formed against me in the news-

paper dens and greenroom lairs, and *Othello* is only whetting their appetite for *Hernani.* That is the position of affairs. It is very sad, as you perceive. One must pay dearly for success. But make haste and come, and then I shall forget it—for a few days at least.

Show this letter to our friend Boulanger, who will show you his; for all that is in me and everything that comes from me is as much for one as for the other.

VICTOR.

My wife sends you many kind messages, and wants you to return at once. Kindest regards to our dear good Robelin. All our friends send their love to you, and are always talking of you—not as much as I do, though.

12th March [1830].

We are at the Odéon, dear friend. You have a free pass; it would be most charming of you to come and join us there.—Yours with all my heart,

VICTOR.

To MONSIEUR SAINTE-BEUVE, *care of* M. ULRICH GÜTTINGUER, *Rue Fontenelle, Rouen.*

PARIS, *Sunday, 16th May* 1830.

You know how lazy I am, my friend; but it appears to me that you do not know what a good friend I can be, since you suppose that I shall accept your *dispensation* from writing. The only reason I know of which could induce me not to write to you, would be the thought that the being deprived of my letters would tend to shorten your absence, and bring you back a few days sooner. But Güttinguer is with you, and such delightful companionship must fill all the blanks in your heart—fortunately for you, unfortunately for me.

If you only knew how much we have missed you of late! How sad and empty it seemed to us, even amid our family life, even with our children around us, to move into this deserted town of Francois I. without you! How at every moment we missed your advice, your help, your attentions, and, in the evenings, your conversation, and always your affection! There is no doubt about it. The habit has become a rooted one. You will never again, I hope, be so unkind as to leave us, to desert us in this manner. This is an ordeal which, at all events, will be so far useful as to prevent you from essaying another, and Normandy will protect us from Greece.

However, we are well off here so far as material comfort goes—really perfectly so. We have trees, plenty of air, a lawn under our windows, some big children in the house to play with our little ones; M. de Mortemart, who

is very amiable, and overwhelms us with newspapers and kind attentions; plenty of solitude, no more *Hernanistes*— in fact, we should be quite happy were it not for the two empty rooms, which make all the rest of the house seem deserted to us.

I am even writing poetry. And *à propos* of this, your last letter disappointed me. Boulanger left for Rouen a few days ago. I thought he had seen you there; on the strength of which, behold me seated under the big trees in the Champs Élysées, writing line after line to Sainte-Beuve and to Boulanger, *my artist and my poet*, both absent, both at Rouen; and then comes a letter from you without a word about Boulanger, and so completely upsetting my two elegies! Fancy that.

Farewell, my friend. We all send our love to you, and I embrace you for them all. But do come back soon. All this is for our friend Güttinguer as well. You have read Nisard's charming article. I wrote to him for you.

To MONSIEUR SAINTE-BEUVE, 19 *Rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs.*

Friday evening [4 *th June* 1830].

We were at home, dear friend! Fancy our annoyance! Our porters are stupid! Never heed what they say, but always come upstairs. On Sunday, then? without fail! You ought to come to dinner with us.

VICTOR.

To MONSIEUR SAINTE-BEUVE, *care of* M. ULRICH GÜTTINGUER, *at Rouen.*

5th August [1830].[1]

I am writing these few lines in a great hurry, my dear friend. We are quiet now. The population of Paris behaved admirably, both during the struggle and after the victory. Let us hope that all will go on well.

I am going on duty in the National Guard. I love you more than I can say.

VICTOR.

My love to Güttinguer.

To MONSIEUR SAINTE-BEUVE, 19 *Rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs.*

Thursday [*4th November* 1830].

I have just read the article you have written on yourself, and it moved me to tears. For Heaven's sake, I implore you, my friend, do not give way in this manner. Think of the friends you have—of one especially, who is now writing to you. You know what you are to him, what an opinion he has of your past and of your future. You know that if your happiness is poisoned, his must be so too; because it is necessary for him to know that

[1] *Note by Sainte-Beuve:* "Revolution of July."

you are happy. Do not lose heart, then. Do not despise what makes you great: your genius, your life, your virtue. Remember that you belong to us, and that there are two persons here whose continual and favourite subject of conversation is yourself.—Your best friend,

V.

Come and see us.

8th December [1830].

Can you believe that I speak of you *with levity*? I may have said that you were *changeable* in your opinions on art and such like trifling matters, but not in your affections. Do not let us bury our friendship in oblivion; let us keep it pure and sacred, as we have always done. Let us make allowances for each other, my friend. I have my trials, you have yours; the pain caused by the shock will pass away. Time will heal everything; let us hope that some day all this will only make us love each other better. My wife has read your letter. Come and see me often, and go on writing to me.

Remember that, *after all*, you have no better friend than me.

V.

24th December [1830].

You do well to write to me, my friend; you do well, for the sake of all of us. My wife and I read your letters together, and we speak of you with deep affection. The days you remind me of are very dear to me. Do you think they will never return? *I* hope they will. There! It will always be a pleasure to me to see you, a pleasure to write to you. There are only two or three things really worth having in life, and friendship is one of them. But let us write to each other, and often. Our hearts are still keeping up their intercourse. There is no breach between us.

VICTOR.

1st January 1831.

[1] Good-morning, Sainte-Beuve. Thank you very much for the beautiful doll. Charles is also very pleased, and we will give you a good hug when you come to see papa and mamma. My little sister is very pleased too.—Your little friend,

DIDINE.

Le 1er Janvier 1831.

[1] Bon jour, Sainte-Beuve, je te remercie bien de ta belle poupée. Charles est bien content aussi, et nous tanbrasserons bien quand tu viendra voir papa et maman; ma petite sœur est bien contente aussi.—Ta petite amie,

DIDINE.

TO MONSIEUR SAINTE-BEUVE

2nd January 1831.

You have been very kind, my friend, to my little ones. We want to thank you for it, both my wife and I. So will you come to dinner with us to-morrow, Tuesday? 1830 is passed and gone!—Your friend,

VICTOR.

Did you get Didine's letter?

9th March [1831].

I have not seen you for ages, dear friend, and I am always thinking and talking of you. I will send you *Notre-Dame de Paris* one of these days. Do not be too hard on it. In the meanwhile, allow me to introduce M. Buloz to you, editor of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, a periodical which is in course of regeneration, and which would be very considerably rejuvenated if you were to lend it your assistance. M. Buloz, whom I think you will like very much, is most anxious to talk this matter over with you.

Pray do all you can for him. — Your constant friend,

V. H.

Sunday, 13*th* [*March* 1831].

I did not see you last night, my friend, and I was really sorry for it. I have so much to say to you, so much to tell you about the pain you are giving me, so many heartfelt requests to make to you, my friend, for your own sake, Sainte-Beuve, whom I love more than myself. I want so much to hear you say that you love me still, to be able to believe it, that I must go and see you some of these days, and have a long, unreserved, and affectionate talk with you about all this. Does it not sometimes strike you that you may be wrong, my friend? Oh! I implore you, do get this idea into your head; it is perhaps the only remaining hold I have over you. We will talk about it, will we not?

Now to unimportant matters.

Will you take *Notre-Dame de Paris* in hand? Do you still think you need not cut it up too much; for if it is to be cut up, I had rather this was not done by you. If so, put a short paragraph in the *Globe*, to-morrow or the next day, with a notice that the book will appear on Wednesday. I have told Gosselin to send you one of the first copies. You will read it, won't you? And then you will tell me quite frankly if you think you can review it; and one of these days I will go and write in your copy that I always am, have been, and shall be, your best friend,

V. H.

TO MONSIEUR SAINTE-BEUVE

Friday, 18th March 1831.

MY FRIEND,—I did not wish to write to you with the impression made by your letter fresh in my mind. It was too sad and too bitter. I should have been unjust in my turn. I wanted to wait for a few days. To-day, at all events, I am calm, and I can read your letter again without reopening too widely the deep wound it gave me. I must tell you, I did not think that what has passed between us, *what is known to us alone*, could ever be forgotten, especially by you, by the Sainte-Beuve that I have known. Oh yes! I say it with greater sorrow for you than for myself, —you are very different from what you were. You must remember, if your new friends have not made even the shadow of your old ones fade from your mind, you must remember what passed between us in the most painful moment of my life, when I had to choose between her and you; recollect what I said to you, *what I proposed to you, what I offered you with the firm resolution*, as you know, of keeping my promise, and *doing what you wished.* Recollect all this, and then reflect that you have just written to me that I showed a want of openness, of confidence, and of sincerity towards you in this matter. This is what you brought yourself to write hardly three months afterwards. I forgive you from this moment. Perhaps a day will come when you will not forgive yourself for it.

Your friend still, in spite of yourself,

V. H.

4th April [1831].

It is I, my friend, who wish to go and see you, to thank you, to shake hands with you. Your letter gave me great and true pleasure. You see, my friend, at least I feel it, that one cannot get rid of an old friendship like ours so easily. It would be a great misfortune if we could survive the death of such a large fragment of ourselves.

VICTOR HUGO.

You will come and dine with us one of these days, won't you?

Friday morning, 1st July 1831.

. . . . . .

Dans un concours heureux brillaient de toutes parts,
Le sentiment, le charme et l'amour des beaux-arts.
Sur quarante mortels qui briguaient son suffrage,
Est-ce peu qu'aux traits séduisants
De votre muse de quinze ans.
L'Académie ait dit: Jeune homme, allons! courage! . . .
Tendre ami des neuf sœurs, mes bras vous sont ouverts!
Venez, j'aime toujours les vers!

. . . . . .

That is all I can remember, my dear friend. It was in 1817. Do what you like with it. They are but poor verses to be inserted in your fine prose, and it is indeed good of you to give the luckless François de Neufchâteau such a setting.

TO MONSIEUR SAINTE-BEUVE

We are enjoying ourselves thoroughly here — so much so that we have no idea when we shall leave; my wife is delighted, cheerful, interested, happy, and quite well. It is a charming kind of hospitality. Farewell, the bell is ringing for luncheon. Do not forget to write to me from Liége. — Always sincerely yours,

VICTOR.

6th July 1831.

What I have to write to you, dear friend, gives me the greatest pain, but yet I must write it. Had you gone to Liége I need not have done so, and that is why I have seemed sometimes to desire a thing which at any other time would have been a real misfortune to me, namely, your absence. But since you are not going, and I admit you may have good reasons for it, I must make a clean breast of everything to you, my friend, even should it be for the last time. I can no longer bear a state of things which your remaining in Paris would prolong indefinitely.

I do not know if you have come to the same melancholy conclusion as I have, but this three months' attempt at a semi-intimacy, badly renewed and badly patched up, has not been a success. It is not, my friend, our old irrecoverable friendship. When you are not with me, I feel from the bottom of my heart that I love you as much as ever; but when you are, I suffer tortures.

We are no longer at ease with one another, you see! We are not the two brothers that we were. I have lost you, and you have lost me: there is something between us. It is terrible to feel this, when one is together, in the same room, seated on the same sofa, and can touch each other's hands. When one is a couple of hundred miles off, one fancies it is the distance that causes the separation. That is why I said to you—Go! Don't you understand all this, Sainte-Beuve? What has become of our trust, our mutual confidences, our freedom of coming and going, our endless and unreserved talks? They have all disappeared. Everything is a torture to me now. Even the obligation, imposed on me by a person whom I cannot mention here, of being always present when you are there, reminds me constantly and very painfully that we are not the friends of old days. My poor friend, there is an element of absence in your presence which makes it even more unbearable than your real absence. At all events, if you go, the blank will be complete.

Let us give up seeing each other, then, for some time to come, so as not to cease loving each other. Has your wound healed? I am sure I do not know. All I do know is that mine has not. Every time I see you it bleeds afresh. You must sometimes feel that I am no longer the same. The reason is, that I suffer as you do. This irritates me, in the first place, and especially against myself; then against you, my poor dear friend; and finally against another, whose wishes perhaps correspond with those I express in this letter. In spite of all I do, some trace of all this heart-ache will come

out; and this makes us all miserable—more so than we were before we met again.

Let us give up seeing each other, then, for the present, so as to meet again some day, as soon as possible, and then not to part. The distance we live from each other, the season of the year, our expeditions into the country, that I am never to be found at home, will be sufficient reasons for the world. As for us, we shall understand what it means. You and I will still love each other; we will write to each other, will we not? If we meet anywhere, it will be a pleasure to us; we shall shake hands with more affection and more expansiveness than here. What do you think of all this? Write me a few lines.

I close this letter here. Excuse all these incoherent ideas. It has given me great pain to write this letter, my friend. Burn it, that nobody may read it again, not even yourself.

Farewell.—Your friend, your brother,

VICTOR.

I have shown this letter to the only person who was entitled to read it before you.

7th July 1831.

I have just received your letter, dear friend; it breaks my heart. You are quite right, your conduct has been perfectly loyal, you have not injured anyone either con-

sciously or unconsciously . . . it is all my unhappy imagination, my friend! I love you now more than ever. I hate myself—it is no exaggeration to say I hate myself for being so foolish and morbid. Should the day come when my life would be of service to you, you should have it, and the sacrifice would be a slight one, for—I say this to *you only*—I am no longer happy. I have acquired the conviction that it was possible for the object of all my love to cease to love me. It is no use my repeating to myself all that you say, and that the mere idea of such a thing is folly; this one drop of suspicion is enough to poison my whole life. Yes, indeed you must pity me, for I am really unhappy. I no longer know how I stand with the two beings whom I love most on earth. You are one of them. Pity me, love me, write to me.

For three months I had been suffering more than ever. The sight of you every day when I was in this state stirred up all these fatal ideas within me. I shall never allow anything of this to appear to the outside world; you alone will know of it. You are still—you agree to this, do you not?—my first and best friend. Yet you had never seen this aspect of my character. How foolish I must seem to you! and how I must grieve you! Write and tell me that you still love me. It will do me good. And I shall look forward to the happy day when we shall meet again.

V.

TO MONSIEUR SAINTE-BEUVE

10th July 1831.

Your letter has done me good. Yes, indeed you are still my friend, and more so than ever. It is only a kind and loving friend like you whose delicate touch can probe so deep and painful a wound! We will meet now and again. We will dine together sometimes. It will be a pleasure for me. In the meantime, my poor friend, pray to God that I may recover my equanimity. I am not accustomed to suffering!

V.

Write to me. Do not forsake me.

21st [*July* 1831].

My eyes are so bad, dear friend, that I can hardly see to write to you. I have just received your letter, on my return from the country, where I had gone to spend a few days, hoping to find something to divert my thoughts; but without success there, as elsewhere. I have but one thought, full of sadness, bitterness, and uneasiness, but I assure you, in reality, full of tenderness for you. Here are the lines you ask me for. Do just as you like with them. It is much too kind of you to be still interested in me. I am still very proud of it, and it touches me more than ever. But, above all, love me and pity me.—Your brother,

VICTOR.

Friday evening [*5th August* 1831].

Your letter moves me to tears, my friend. Yes, I expect you. Here is a pass. Have you any friends of the kind you know I need, with the enemies I have? I will find places for them. Do you think that Lerminier, Magnin, and Brizeux would like to hear *Marion*, and will you undertake to tell them that I have seats at their disposal? Forgive me; you see how I make use of you: it is like old days again.—Your faithful friend,

VICTOR.

The performance will take place on Thursday, and the rehearsal on Wednesday. You will see "*No performance to-night*" on the play-bill.

17th May [1832].

I think, my dear friend, that you have seen Renduel, and that he has told you what I asked him to do. Up to the present I have been very cautious in offering your article to the *Débats*, and have insisted on all the privileges due to your abilities, and asked that the article should be accepted on the strength of your name alone, without being previously read. However, as M. Bertin senior, who has, as you know, the very highest opinion of your work and of yourself, expressed a wish to me yesterday to read your article, just to see that it did not contain anything contrary to the political opinions of the

paper, I do not think it would do to refuse him. I will send it to him, then, if you have no objection. M. Bertin is very strongly inclined to insert the article, and I am sure it will be accepted. If not, I still count on your good intentions with regard to the *National*. I may add here, *in confidence*, that the wish to have you as literary editor of the *Débats* seems to me very strong, and is shown in everything that is said to me. *Keep this quite to yourself.* What is your opinion?

Now, would it be possible to add a page to your admirable article, it does not matter where, at the end, for instance, about the edition itself, and the new prefaces, especially that to the *Dernier jour d'un condamné*, which is of some length if not importance, and saying that, when the new edition of *Notre-Dame de Paris* appears, the paper will notice it again, as well as the three new chapters, which are very long, and in which Louis XI. figures. This is in the material interest of the edition, as well as that of the publisher. Forgive me! If you agree, write and tell me if I must return you the article, or if you can make the addition without it, and send it me in time not to delay the despatch of the whole to M. Bertin too much.

Once more forgive me, and a thousand thanks.

V. ✓

7th June, 10 P.M. [1832].

I have just come in, my dear friend, too late for the rendezvous at the *National*; but I join you with all my

heart. I will sign everything that you sign, in defiance of the state of siege.[1]—Your devoted friend,

VICTOR.

12th June 1832.

I am quite as indignant as you are, my dear friend, with these miserable political jugglers who put Article 14 up their sleeve, and keep the declaration of a state of siege all the time in the false bottom of their conjuring box!

I only hope they will not have the hardihood to blow out the brains of these hot-headed but generous young fellows. If these would-be keepers of the peace were to venture on a political execution, and four men of spirit were to get up a riot to save the victims, I would make a fifth.

It is indeed a sad but at the same time a fine subject for a poem, all this folly steeped in bloodshed. We shall have a Republic some day, and when it does come it will be a good one. But we must not gather in May the fruit which will not be ripe till August. We must know how to wait. The Republic proclaimed by France in Europe will be the crown of our old age. But we must not let our flag be smeared with red by

[1]After the events of June 1832, in consequence of the insurrection, Paris was placed in a state of siege; there were fears at one time of a sanguinary reaction, and there was some talk of inserting a signed protest in the *National* (Sainte-Beuve, *Portraits contemporains*, 1870).

these blackguards. For instance, a Frédéric Soulié, who a year ago was devoted to M. d'Argout's dramatic quasi-censorship, must not be allowed to bawl out in the middle of a *café* that he is going to make bullets. A Fontan must not be permitted to announce in a pot-house that by the end of the month four splendid guillotines will be permanently set up in the four principal squares of Paris. People of this kind throw back the political ideas which, but for them, would make progress. They frighten the honest tradesman, who is made savage by reaction. They make a bugbear of the Republic. Ninety-three is not much of a bait. We ought to talk a little less of Robespierre and a little more of Washington.

Farewell. We shall meet soon, I hope. I am working hard just now. I approve of all you have done, and only regret that the protest did not appear. At anyrate, my friend, keep my signature next to yours.—Your brother,

VICTOR.

LES ROCHES, *Friday, 21st September* [1832].

I am writing you a few lines in a great hurry, my friend. Someone is just starting for Paris, and will deliver this letter to you. If a letter is posted at Bièvre, it takes three or four days to reach Paris. I really believe it goes round by Marseilles.

We are living here in the greatest peace imaginable.

We have trees and greenery, with the beautiful blue sky of September over our heads. The most I manage to do is to write a few verses. I assure you, the best thing here is to enjoy the pleasure of living. It is a sleepy hollow.

Still, your letter made me regret I was not in Paris. If I had been there, we would have dined together in some pot-house, and you would have read me your article on Lamartine. You know how much I love Lamartine, and how much I love you. I look on you as twin poets: two admirable poets of the heart, of the soul, and of life. So you can imagine how I long to see one analysed by the other. I am eagerly expecting the *Revue* of the 1st of October. It is strange that you should have made me wish for a periodical in the middle of all this pretty country.

M. Bertin has invited the Abbé de la Mennais and Montalembert to dine at Les Roches. They are coming on Sunday. They will find but indifferent Catholics here, but true and sincere admirers of every kind of genius and virtue.

Farewell, my dear friend. I do not require your kind presence at *Le Roi s'Amuse* at present. You may be sure I shall make use of you, as you would of me. The greatest happiness on earth is to help a friend, the next greatest is to be helped by him.—Farewell. Yours most sincerely,

VICTOR.

We are all wonderfully well. My wife walks six miles every day, and is growing visibly stouter.

TO MONSIEUR SAINTE-BEUVE

To MONSIEUR SAINTE-BEUVE, 1 *Ter Rue du Montparnasse.*

13*th November* 1832.

Every place in the theatre is taken, my friend, and taken all at once, and by all kinds of people. It happened so quickly that I was quite astonished by it. Still, a few boxes have been reserved for such of my friends as care to take them, and I am glad to be able to let Madame Allart have one. The day before the performance (which will take place on the 22nd), she can send for the tickets for Box No. 5 in the second tier on the left side. There are six seats in the box. I am keeping a stall for you, and I will give you the two tickets you want. How kind you are to think of me, and to have some affection for me still.

You are right—the *gentleman* is surpassing himself; but what does it matter? He is to be pitied rather than blamed. He will be delighted if *Le Roi s'Amuse* is a failure. This is his revenge on me for the frantic applause which greeted *Othello.*

As for you, you remain the great poet and the kind friend. I should much like to meet you some Sunday evening at Nodier's—next Sunday, perhaps?—Your old friend,

V.

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Saturday evening, 1st December 1832.

I have seen Carrel, my friend, and found him cordial and kind. He told me that all you had to do was to bring him an extract from the preface to-morrow (Renduel should have sent it to you this evening), with a sort of short article in which you can say what you like, and that the whole will be published on Monday morning in the political part of the paper. He assured me he thought it was the duty of the *National* to back me up energetically and unreservedly in the action I am going to bring against the Ministry; and he said, *of his own accord*, that I might ask you in his name to write, about five or six days hence, a lengthy political article on the whole question, pointing out how necessary it is for the Opposition to support me warmly, if it does not wish to forego its rights. You know my retired and domestic habits, my dear friend, and will understand how necessary all this assistance is to me in the struggle which I am bound to take up and persevere in. Altogether, I was much pleased with Carrel. He is inclined to do all he can to make my case as prominent as possible. As for the literary side of the question, he is also behaving very well. He even says he will have no objection to you or Magnin writing an article on the printed play in a week or so, when Rolle's article will have been sufficiently forgotten to prevent the paper having the appearance of contradicting itself.

Farewell, my poor friend. This is a great deal to ask of you all at once. I am afraid I am too importunate. But you are still the friend I depend on most; and every

day I pray that I may have the opportunity of returning you all the kindnesses I owe you. I place myself entirely in your hands.—Ever your friend,

VICTOR.

[*December* 1832].

I do not know Béranger's address, my dear Sainte-Beuve. As you often see him, would you be so kind as to forward this parcel to him?

I hope we shall meet soon. I love you more than ever.

VICTOR.

I think Renduel has sent you your copy. What is our worthy Leroux about? I never see him now.

31*st December* 1832.

[1] MY DEAR SAINT-DE-BEUVE,—Thank you very much for the beautiful book *Paul et Virginie* that you

31*st December* 1832.

[1] MON CHER SAINT-DE-BEUVE,—Je te remercie bien du beau livre de *Paul et Virginie* que tu m'a envoyé. Toto et Charles ont très content du soldats et du jardin déplante. Dédé est très contente du beau boa que tu lui a donné, et elle le prends pour son petit chat, si on lui donnait toujours elle s'amusera bien. Malheureusement, on ne veut pas lui lesser toujours. Papa m'a dit que je dise bien des choses de sa part maman aussi.—Adieu, mon cher Saint-de-Beuve,

LÉOPOLDINE HUGO.

sent me. Toto and Charles are very pleased with their zoological gardens and box of soldiers. Dédé is very pleased with the beautiful boa you gave her. She thinks it is a little pussy-cat; if they would let her always have it, she would be very happy. But, unfortunately, they won't let her have it always. Papa tells me to send you his love; so does mamma. — Good-bye, my dear Saint-de-Beuve.

LÉOPOLDINE HUGO.

31*st December* 1832.

Here is a specimen of Didine's style. I really must add a little of mine to it, to thank you, and send you my best love.

VICTOR.

18*th* [*January*] 1832.

When the public is excluded, you, my friend, can always get in. I will therefore get you admitted to a rehearsal as soon as there is a fairly good one, and I shall be delighted to see you there. I will take the two stalls you want in the amphitheatre (red stalls): they are the best places in the theatre. They will be entered in your name.[1]—Yours sincerely, VIC.

[1] The reference is to the performance of *Lucrezia Borgia*. Sainte-Beuve had asked for the two stalls for George Sand.

TO MONSIEUR SAINTE-BEUVE

Sunday [*24th February*] 1833.

I am sending you, my friend, some remarks of Planche which completely puzzle me. He must be out of his mind to imagine that I can ever assume the slightest connection, let alone community of interest, between you and him.

You know well that you have no truer friend than I am.

V.

25th February [1833].

The friendship between you and me, Sainte-Beuve, is too firmly and durably cemented to allow petty personal questions to divide us for a single moment. We are real friends. It is our duty not to give a moment's credence to the stupid or malicious gossip which may be retailed to us as having been said by one of us about the other. I am sure you do not doubt, my friend, that your name is never mentioned by me but as it ought to be, with every expression of the most fraternal friendship, admiration, and affection. I could not even bear to have around me men who did not share my opinion of you, and who did not speak of you as I do. You are one of my objects of worship. Do not forget this; and whenever you are told that I have spoken of you otherwise than as of a brother, just say, "*That is not so.*" I do not know why I am writing you all this, for I am sure I am merely giving

expression to your own thoughts; but since people have been stupid enough to mention your name in connection with M. Buloz' unworthy behaviour to me, I wanted to tell you that you have never been dearer to me, or more continually in my thoughts, than now, when I hardly ever see you.

V.

10*th March* [1833].

I must write you a few lines, my friend, on Abel's behalf. M. Buloz' dislike of me is being passed on to him. M. Buloz had made an agreement with him through me, which led Abel to refuse offers made him from other quarters. Now M. Buloz thinks fit to evade or cancel the agreement . . . I will have nothing to say to him. But it would be very kind of you, my dear Sainte-Beuve, to speak to him on the subject. . . . See if all recollection of past services has not faded from his mind. All future relations between him and me depend on this matter. I judge people once for all, and there is an end of it.

I will go and see you, my friend. I will have a talk with you about this, and also about many other matters on which I need your friendly advice. Your friendship is still one of the bright spots in my life. I never think of it without emotion. The other day I was reading *Les Consolations* again. Where is that delightful past? What does *not* pass away is the memory of a friendship

like yours in a heart like mine. Farewell. Rest assured that I have never been more *worthy* of being loved by you.

12*th June* [1833].

My friendship with you, my dear Sainte-Beuve, is, as you know, quite apart from all literary and political questions whatsoever. No doubt it would give me great pleasure to know that your opinions were, as in the old days, in harmony with mine on all those art problems the solution of which is one of the interests of my life. But it can't be helped: we are all more or less unsettled. One thing is settled and unvarying with me, and that is my admiration for all you do, and my love for what you are.

You propose that we should dine together. It would be a great pleasure to me, and I should have endless things to tell you. I will write and let you know the first day I am disengaged.—Farewell. We shall meet soon.

V.

20*th August* [1833].

I must go and see you one of these days, my dear Sainte-Beuve. I want to have a talk with you. I want to

tell you what I have just said to someone who repeated to me—without malice, however—some cold remarks which you were supposed to have made about me. I said it could not be so—that we both knew we had no truer friend than each other, that our friendship was one of those which are proof against absence and gossip, and that I loved you with all my heart, as I have always done. I said this, and now I sit down to write it to you, so that nothing may come between us unawares, and that not even the faintest shadow may arise between your heart and mine.

We shall soon meet. Farewell. My eyes are still very bad, and I am working hard.

VICTOR.

22nd August [1833].

I must write to you at once, while the impression your letter has made is fresh in my mind. Perhaps I ought to wait a day or two, but I cannot. How little you understand my character, Sainte-Beuve: you have always thought me ruled by my head, whereas I am guided by my heart. To love, and to need *love* and *friendship*—apply these two words as you like—is the principle of my existence, whether in joy or grief, before the world or in private, heart-whole or not. You have never recognised this sufficiently in me, and this accounts for more than one signal mistake in your estimate of me, so kindly in other respects. You will shake your head

at this, but it is nevertheless perfectly true. You write me a long letter, my poor dear friend, full of literary details and unimportant facts magnified by our separation, which would vanish into nothing and make us both laugh after half-an-hour's chat. I am so convinced of this that I am sure you would think so too after a moment's reflection, and I therefore do not dwell on it. I think I have already told you, Sainte-Beuve, there can be no *literary* question between us. There were two friends, no more and no less. I admit that absence has produced an opposite effect on us both. You love me less than you did two years ago, while I love you more. On reflection, the explanation is very simple. I was the offended party. The slow and gradual process of forgetting the events which estranged us acts in your favour in my heart, and against me in yours. Since life is so constituted, let us resign ourselves.

On my side I was still so firmly attached to you, that your letter telling me that you are no longer my friend leaves me all sore and torn. The wound will continue to bleed for a long time. Farewell, I am still your sincere friend. My consolation in this life will be that I have never been the first to part from one who loved me.

Boulanger had not told me anything. I should have mentioned it to you.

24th August [1833].

Thank you, my friend, for your letter; thanks even for the first, since it brings me the second. You had no idea how deeply you had wounded me, nor how much good you do me now. Great Heavens! why cannot the depths of my heart, which is yours more than ever, be laid bare? Absence kills nothing in me—friendship as little as love. I thought you knew this. Twelve years ago, a separation of eighteen months only caused my love to become deeper and more holy. My heart has never altered. I am still the same stubborn creature in all things, who loves even without seeing the object of his affection. I suffer, but I love on. Do you suppose that I have not gone through much on your account during the last two years? You have often been misled by a certain outward calm in me.

My wishes coincide with yours, of course. We will dine together once a week. We will let no dust settle on our memories of the past or on our secret shrines. My warmest thanks for what you propose to me about Charles. We will talk it over. I feel how sincere and touching your offer is, and it would be a great thing for the child. But you see what obstacles there are. Anyhow, whether the thing is done or not, I am deeply grateful. A thousand thanks. You do me good; you bring me back a friend—and such a friend

I must love you, and feel that I am loved by you. It is part of my life.

I am under an engagement to finish and send in a play before the 1st of September. You know how my

work absorbs me when once I get into it; so I must end this letter. After that date I will go and see you, or I will write to ask you to fix a day for us to have a long unreserved talk. I did go to see you a little while ago. Did you know it? Oh! Sainte-Beuve, two such friends as we are should never *part.* It would be a crime. There! I am your devoted friend.

28th August [1833].

This is only to tell you, my friend, that I am hard at work, that I am thinking of you, and that I am yours with all my heart.

We shall meet soon. Love me.

V.

At LES ROCHES, *1st October* [1833].

I am writing to you from the country, my friend, but I shall be in Paris next Monday. Several of our friends want to hear my play. I am going to read it to them at seven in the evening in the Place Royale. Will you join us? You will be most heartily welcome. It will remind us of happier days.

Farewell. We will fix the day you mention for dining together.—Your old friend,

VICTOR.

21st October [1833].

Many thanks, my friend, for your two kind notes. I will see that all you want is done. They will only have to send to the theatre the day before the performance. We will dine together any day you like.—I love you dearly.

VICTOR.

27th November 1833.

Any day you like excepting Sunday, my friend. Only, give me two or three days' notice, and tell me the exact time and the place of our meeting. I shall be delighted to see you and have a talk with you. I shall take refuge in your friendship for a few moments.

VICTOR HUGO.

Has Renduel sent you your copy of *Marie-Tudor*?

4th February [1834].

MY FRIEND,—One must be very certain of the rights a friendship like ours confers, to be able to write and tell you what I have on my mind at this moment. But I prefer this course to silence, which might be misinterpreted. I have read your article, which is one of

the best you have ever written, and, like our conversation the other day at Güttinguer's house, it has left a painful impression on me, which I must communicate to you. I find in it (and it produces this effect on *two* persons) unbounded eulogy, magnificent language, but underlying all—and this makes me very sad—an absence of kindly feeling. I should have preferred less praise and more sympathy. What is the cause of this? . . . Have we come to this point? Examine yourself conscientiously, and tell me if I am right. If I am mistaken, tell me so too, and as roughly as you like. I shall be glad if you can prove that I am wrong.

Before closing this letter, I wished to read your article again, for the fourth time, and my impression of it remains the same. Victor Hugo is overwhelmed with praise; Victor Hugo thanks you; but Victor, your old friend Victor, is grieved.—Sincerely yours,

V.

7th February [1834].

I wish I had you here to shake you by the hand. Your letter is a kind one; thank you, my friend. I have barely time to write you a few lines, but I must not let the day go by without telling you that you will make me sleep well to-night.

V.

Tuesday evening, 1*st April* [1834].

Any friend of mine has to share so much animosity and so much despicable persecution nowadays, that I can quite understand even the most tried friendship shrinking from the ordeal. Farewell, then, my friend; let us each bury in silence what was already dead in you, and what your letter kills in me. Farewell.

V.

To MONSIEUR SAINTE-BEUVE, *at the Institut.*

28*th February* 1845.[1]

Your letter moves and touches me. I thank you with all my heart for your thanks.

V.

[1] After Victor Hugo's speech for Sainte-Beuve's reception into the French Academy.

LETTERS TO THE CHILDREN LÉOPOLDINE AND CHARLES

ÉTAMPES, 19*th August* 1834.

Good-morning, my pet; good-morning, my dear little girlie. I promised to write to you. You see, I am keeping my word.

I have seen the sea, some fine churches, and some pretty country. The sea is large, the churches are handsome, the country is pretty; but the country is not as pretty as you, the churches are not as handsome as your mamma, and the sea is not as great as my love for you all.

My pet, I have often given halfpence to poor children walking barefooted by the roadside, for your sakes, my little ones. I love you all dearly.

A few hours more and I shall be kissing you on your two dear little cheeks, and also my big Charlie, and my little Dédé, who will give me a smile, I hope, and my beloved Toto.

Good-bye for the present, my Didine. Keep this letter. When you are grown up I shall be old, you will show it me, and we shall love each other dearly; when

you are old you will show it to your children, and they will love you as much as I do. We shall soon meet.—Your own daddy,

V.

AMIENS, *3rd August* 1835.

I am writing to you on very bad paper, my Didine, but I should like to put so many nice things on it as to make it seem charming to you.

I hope you have been very good, very gentle, very quiet, and very nice to your mother, who is so kind herself.

You must take my place with her till I see you again, and also make up to her for the other dear little children, who are dull in Paris while you are enjoying yourself at Angers.

When you see them again you must kiss them all for me—Charlie on his two fat cheeks, Toto on his forehead, and Dédé on her sweet little mouth.

I love you dearly, my Didine.—Your own daddy,

V.

TRÉPORT, *6th August* 1835.

Thank you for your nice little letter, my pet; I shall be very glad when the day comes for me to thank you with a kiss on both your cheeks.

TO THE CHILDREN

I am at the seaside; it is very beautiful; but if you were there with your mother and the other little ones, it would look quite ugly compared with you all.

I am delighted with that story of the cows which gave grandpapa a draught of milk. I would have asked you to give them a hug for me, but you have not got them with you now.

Good-bye for the present, my Didinette; write to me, and tell mother to give you a kiss and ten sous.—Your own daddy,

V.

7th August 1836.

Good-morning, my Didine. Good-morning, my pet. I am writing to you from Rennes. It is five o'clock in the morning. It is Thursday, a holiday. I have been travelling for two days and two nights, shaken up like a bottle that is being rinsed. I shall see the sea to-day.

Here are kisses for you, and for my three other little treasures.

Good-bye for the present.—Your own daddy,

V.

VALENCIENNES, *15th August* 1837.

The church bells are pealing as I arrive in this town. It is the fête of the Virgin. I dedicate it to you, my child.

I did not wish to let this day go by without writing to you, my beloved Didine. Not a day, not an hour passes without my thinking of you.

Your mother, you, your brothers, and your dear little sister are always in my thoughts, and united to me in the same love.

Did you get my last little scrawl? Did you like it, my Didine? Keep it for my sake.

Above all, keep your innocence and your kind heart, your reverence for God and for your mother, your simple mind, and constant desire to do right; in so doing you will some day, like your mother, unite the virtues of the woman to the innocence of the child.

To get here, I had to pass through lovely country, green and covered with flowers, which made me think of God; I spoke to it of you, of all of you, my dear ones, whom I have left behind me.

Kiss all those I love who are around you for me, beginning with your mother.—Your own daddy,

V.

ÉTAPES, *near* BOULOGNE-SUR-MER,
3rd September, 9 P.M. [1837].

I have passed through Dunkirk, Calais, and Boulogne-sur-Mer, my darling Didine; and I have read your two nice little letters over and over again, as well as those from your brothers and from your dear mother, who is so beloved and so worthy of it. Your grandfather has also

written me a charming letter. Give him my best love and thanks for this, and do not leave out Juju. I have just been walking on the beach and thinking of you, my poor little darling. I gathered this flower for you on the sandhills. It is a wild pansy, which has been often watered by the foam of the ocean. Keep it for daddy's sake, who is so fond of you. I have already sent your mother a flower from the ruins, the Ghent poppy, and now here is a flower from the sea. And then, my darling, I wrote your name on the sand, Didi. To-night the rising tide will obliterate it, but nothing can ever obliterate your father's love for you.

I have constantly thought of you, dear child. Every fine town I saw made me wish that you, your mother, and your brothers had been with me, and your grandfather to explain everything to us. All day I was looking at churches and pictures, and then at night I gazed at the sky, and thought once more of you, my Didine, as I watched that beautiful constellation, the chariot of God, which I have taught you to distinguish among the stars.

See, my child, how great God is, and how small we are; where we put dots of ink, He puts suns. These are the letters with which He writes. The sky is His book. I shall bless God, my Didine, if you are always able to read it, and I hope you may.

As to the fine towns I have seen, I will tell you all about them. In the meanwhile, here is something to give you a faint idea of them, as the other sketch gives you an idea of the Great Bear. Imagine that my draw-

ing is twinkling, and you will fancy you have seen what I have.

In a few days, my child, between the 10th and the 15th, I shall be in Paris. Oh! what joy it will be to embrace you all again. In the meanwhile, give Charlie, Toto, and Dédé a kiss for me. My fondest love to you and to your mother, to whom I will write to-morrow.—Your own daddy,

V.

For MY DARLING DIDINE.

[1838.]

Thank you for your nice little letter, my Didine. It went to my heart. I see with joy that you love your father as much as he loves you, and that you appreciate beautiful things as he does. You are your father's own child.

Write to me as often as you can, my little pet. I have no doubt I shall often need this ray of sunshine.

You have seen the banks of the Seine; I am going to see the banks of the Rhine, which are still more beautiful. I will take you there some day.

Think of me, dear child, and kiss my Charlie, my Toto, and my Dédé for me. You five at home fill my heart.—Your own daddy,

VICTOR H.

I have not been very well, but I am all right now. My best love to M. Vacquerie.

TO THE CHILDREN

ÉPERNAY, *27th August, noon* [1838].

I am writing you a few lines in great haste, my Didine, as the post is going. I shall get to Paris to-morrow evening, the 28th, at 8 o'clock, and I hope to embrace you all the day after. Remind your dear mother to do all I asked her for Joly, and to get a servant by the time I return.

I have seen Reims, and instead of a long description I send you a little picture of it, which I think will please you just as much. Tell Charlie, Toto, and Dédé that I will draw a picture for each of them when I get to Paris.

Here are many kisses for you, my pet, and for your beloved mother, and all the little ones. Give my love to your grandpapa, who is your kind papa as well.

Good-bye till the day after to-morrow.—Your own daddy,

V.

For MY CHARLIE.

MAYENCE, *1st October* [1838].

MY DEAR OLD CHARLIE,—You must write me a good long letter (to Trèves), beginning it early and finishing it late. You know how much I love you, dear child. I must have a long letter from you. You must also write a little diary for me, telling me how you have spent your time at Saint-Prix during the holidays, and if, as I hope, you have prepared for next year's work amid your play

and leisure time. I want you, my dear Charlie, to be a good hard-working boy and an industrious scholar.

Talking of this reminds me that in one of my letters I gave you an exercise to write. Neither you nor Toto have sent it to me. Now that the holidays are nearly over, and you have only a few days left to play, I will let you off this exercise.

If you have read my letters, dear Charlie, you will know what I mean by *the Cat and the Mouse.* The Cat is for Toto, and the Mouse for you. In my drawing they are quite unlike nature; the mouse is much larger and much fiercer than the cat. The day I was drawing it, the sky, in which it was disappearing, was stormy and lowering.

You will notice at the foot of the adjoining mountain the face of a giant with his mouth open. I drew this very carefully. Your giant is an excellent likeness.

I do all this with pleasure, dear children, for your sakes, to amuse you and make you happy. My pleasures of the moment, as well as the work of all my life, are for you.

I am not sure what state the drawings I send you will arrive in. The ink one gets at inns loses its colour from one day to another in the most tiresome way.

I have worked hard during the holidays, dear Charlie; I hope that you have done the same too a little. You have been always in my thoughts, my dear old boy; I hope that you have thought of your daddy, who loves you as dearly as, nay more than, his life, and who kisses you on both your nice cheeks.

V.

TO THE CHILDREN

For MY DIDINE.

STOCKACH, 19*th October* [1838].

I am writing to you, as well as to your mother, my beloved Didine, and I beg you and her to write me a nice little letter to Forbach, Poste Restante. Write as soon as you have received this note.

Did you read what I wrote about the Cathedral at Mayence? While I was going over this beautiful church I was thinking of you, my darling, and of the description I should give you of it of an evening at our fireside in the Place Royale. I enclose the paper on which I made a few notes while I was in the Cathedral. It is only an illegible scrawl, but keep it all your life, for my sake. It is a souvenir I give you.

The post is going, and I have hardly time to finish this sheet. We shall meet soon, dearest Didine. Kiss my dear boys for me. In a week or so I shall see and embrace you all again. What joy that will be, my darling! It seems to me ages since I saw you last. Good-bye. Think of your daddy, my beloved little daughter. And write to me.

V.

Tuesday, 25th June, 8 P.M. [1839].

I am answering your letter at once, dear child, so that this letter may reach you before you leave. Your

note gave me great pleasure. You are enjoying yourself, you are pleased—that is enough for your parents, my child; we feel you are happy, and that makes us happy.

You must not be surprised at not hearing from your dear mother. She has plenty to do, as you know. She has all the housekeeping to look after, and she spends four hours a day teaching poor dear little Dédé.

Please give our best thanks to kind Mme. Chaley, and all her family, for all the kindness that has been shown you. I must thank you for having copied those lines. I have taken you away from your walks, your games, and your talks under the trees for a time, but, as it has not bored you, I am satisfied. It has made you think of your father, who needs nothing to remind him of you.

Farewell till Thursday, my beloved Didine. You are coming back to us, and everyone is delighted at the idea. Till Thursday, my darling.—Your loving father,

V.

MARSEILLES, *3rd October* [1839].

I have read your two nice letters, my Didine, and they pleased me very much. All that I see—the sky, the mountains, the sea—all this is nothing to me, you see. I prefer my fireside, my old blue sofa, with all of you on my knees, to the Alps and the Mediterranean. I feel it very deeply at this moment when I am alone and reading your dear little letters, which bring tears to my eyes.

TO THE CHILDREN

In a fortnight, between the 15th and the 20th, I shall see you and embrace you again; we shall then have a good long time to be together, and I shall be so happy.

You see, my dear child, one goes away because one needs a change, and one comes back because one wants happiness.

Continue to be good and gentle, and to be a pleasure to me. Be attentive and loving to your good mother. She loves you so much, and is so worthy of your love!

Every evening I look at the stars, as we used to do at night from the balcony in the Place Royale, and I think of you, my Didine. I am glad to see that you love and understand nature. Nature is the face of God. He appears to us through it, and we can read His thoughts in it.

When this letter reaches you, you will be on the point of starting for Paris. Perhaps you will have left already. I shall also be beginning my journey home in a few days. I shall leave the fine weather and brilliant sunshine behind me, but I shall have you, my darling Didine, and all of you, to come back to. I am wrapped up in you all. Many kisses, dear child.—Your dear old daddy,

V.

Write *at once* to Poste Restante, Chalon-sur-Saône.

CANNES, *8th October* [1839].

Here are four sketches for you four, my Didine. I send *you* the Strasburg Cathedral to match that of Reims; to Charlie, a view of a splendid old tower, surrounded by the sea, on the island of Saint-Honorat, two leagues from here (I have written the story of the tower at the side of the drawing); to Toto, the view of a suburb of Bâle, taken from the Cathedral Square; and to Dédé, a few pretty Baden houses, with the town gate. I hope you will all be pleased with them; and then, when I get home, I will do some more sketches for those who have come off worst. I am the best off, after all, because I feel the pleasure I am giving you more than you do.

Those mountains behind the spire of Strasburg are the Black Forest.

This is a beautiful spot; I came to it to see the prison of the *Man with the Iron Mask*. I have also seen the Gulf Juan, where Napoleon landed in 1815. I start for Paris the day after to-morrow. I shall get there by the 18th or 19th. Kiss your dear good mother for me. Tell her I count on getting a letter from her at Chalon-sur-Saône. I had begun a long letter to her, but your drawings prevented me from finishing it. She will get it soon.

You are back at school again, Charlie. Work hard, be as good a scholar as you are a good boy, and love your father, who is always thinking of you.

I will enclose a letter for you in the next I write to your mother. Good-bye for the present, my darling Charlie.

TO THE CHILDREN

We shall meet soon, my Toto. I have been at sea for the last fortnight. I have learnt how to steer a sailing-boat, to make plain knots, gasket knots, running knots, etc. I will show you all my accomplishments in Paris. You are now at school; you must work hard too, my pet.

My Dédé, I love you. You love papa very much, don't you? I wanted to pick up some shells for you here, but I could not find any. There is nothing but sand, which is ridiculous.

I am coming back to you, my Didine. Make your mother happy, my darling, and love me.

We shall meet soon, mamma—very soon, my Adèle. Write me a nice letter, a really nice letter. I love you, and I shall love you still more if you will send me some loving and tender words, which I am longing for.

As to the rent, tell M. Bellanger I will pay it when I come back, about the 18th or 19th.

Kiss me, my Adèle, and be happy, for I am devotedly attached to you.

I embrace you all, my darlings.—Your father,

V.

The drawings are all one inside the other. You must open them carefully.

CHALON-SUR-SAÔNE, *18th October* [1839].

I shall be in Paris about the 23rd or 25th to embrace you, my darling Didine, and to embrace all of you. I hope I shall not be stopped by there being no seats in the diligences. This is what prevents my letting you know the exact day. I do not even know it myself.

I found two nice little letters from you here, my darling. I am so touched by all you say, my child. I see that you love me, that you all love me, and this is the delight of my life.

Write once more to Poste Restante, Fontainebleau. Kiss Charlie and Toto for me, and tell them they must work hard, now that they have been so pleased with the little drawings I sent them.

As for you, my Didine, continue to be good and gentle; improve your heart and mind; love God through your mother, and love me too, I who work only for you all, and everyone will bless you as I do. Good-bye for the present, dear daughter.—Your loving father,

V.

See that all the letters and papers are kept for me, and that nothing is mislaid.

Sunday, 12th [1839].

MY DARLING DIDINE,—Will you send the enclosed note to your friend Clémentine for her brother, who has sent

me some pretty verses, and whose address I do not know. Tell your dear mother I saw Charles and Toto this morning. M. Prieur has bespoken them for the day. Charles' theme is well done, but unfortunately he made two mistakes in it. Still, I do not despair about it. Tell your mother I left the letter for the grocer on my chimney-piece.

Good-bye for the present, dear child. Fondest love to you all.—Your loving father,

V.

13*th May, midnight* [1840].

You have not written to me, Didine, my dear child; you have not thought of your daddy; it is now Wednesday evening, and I do not yet know if I am to get places for your brothers for Saturday evening. Will there be time to do it? Write directly, my Didine. Tell me the news about you all; and then send me my shirtmaker's address; and then give me minute directions how to find your house when one gets to Saint-Prix.

Good-bye till Sunday, I hope, my poor darling. Kiss your dear mother and Dédé for me. My love to your kind grandfather, and I embrace you, my Didine.—Your own daddy,

V.

18th August [1842].

Thank you, my darling daughter, my beloved Didine, for your nice little letter. Write to me like this every day. I was so delighted to hear that Toto was taking such draughts of your good air into his lungs. Here is a little sketch which I send him by way of thanks. But tell him to take great care of himself, not to over-tire himself, not to cough, and to come in early. Tell all this to your dear mother, who is adored by Toto, I am sure. Give her a kiss for me, as well as to Charlie and Dédé.—Your own daddy,

V.

A little job has cropped up for me, as president of the Institute, which keeps me here. As soon as I am free, I will come and see you all and embrace you; I am longing for this as much as you are, my dear ones.

Give my love to dear Julia. Kindest regards to the Collin ladies.

Wednesday, 31st August [1842].

It is a great pleasure to me, my dear little girl, to get all the good news you give me. Your mother has recovered from her slight indisposition; Toto is getting better every day. Thank God! I was rather anxious about Saint-Prix; now I bless the place.

I am afraid I shall not be able to go and see you all

before Friday, and even then I must return here early the next day. I suppose I shall arrive at the same time as M. H. Didier, who wrote to me to ask if he might do so. Your mother will no doubt find a bed for him somewhere.

Please thank the Collin ladies, until I can do so myself. I know how kind they are, but I am doubly pleased when their kindness is extended to all of you.

Kiss your dear mother on both her cheeks, and then Charlie, and Dédé, and Julia. Here is a small letter for my Toto, whose little man is delightful. As for you, my darling daughter, I embrace you, as I love you, very fondly,

V.

Take great care of yourself also. Be careful about your headaches. Eat well, laugh and be merry. Dear children, my chief happiness is to know you are all well.

Wednesday, 7th September [1842].

Here is a little note for Toto, my darling child. I am much afraid my work will prevent my going to see you before the beginning of next week. This distresses me even more than it does you. You know, you all know, that my happiness is to be among you, my children. It requires a great deal of courage to stay here when you are all down there.

Kiss your dear mother for me, my beloved little daughter. Tell dear old Charlie, that as he has taken up drawing he must always draw from real life—slowly, carefully, and conscientiously. That is the way to attain rapidity and steadiness of execution. Tell Dédé to think a little of me, when Gipon and Gipus leave her the time to do so. Above all, enjoy yourselves, keep well, and be happy. In five or six days I hope I shall see Julia with her hair done up in Chinese style; in the meanwhile, give her my best love.

Make my excuses to the Collin ladies for not having been to see them last time, and give them my kind regards. And then, dear child, when you have done all these commissions, ask your mother to kiss you for me; she alone can do it as lovingly as I.—Your loving father,

V.

Friday [1842].

Thank you, my darling child, for your nice little letter. Alas! I cannot come; I am up to my knees, up to my neck, up to my eyes, and even over head and ears in my second act. Kiss your dear mother for me, and here are three scrawls. Cast lots for them among you four. When I come, I will give a kiss to the one who did not get anything.—Your own daddy,

V.

TO THE CHILDREN

To MADAME VACQUERIE-HUGO.

16*th March* [1843].

If you received all the letters I send you, dear child, the postman would disturb your sweet happiness at every moment of the day and night. For a whole month, in the midst of this vortex, beset by renewed animosity, overwhelmed with rehearsals, lawsuits, worries, lawyers, and actors—wearied, harassed, with bad eyes, tormented on every side—I can truly say, my beloved child, that not a quarter of an hour has passed without my thinking of you, and without my sending you, mentally, heaps of kind little messages.

I know you are happy; I rejoice in it from a distance, and with a melancholy pleasure, and your blue sky makes up to me for my clouds. My heart is sad, but at the same time full; I know that your husband is kind, gentle, and charming; I thank him from the bottom of my heart for your happiness; be wise, both of you, and absorbed in each other; true happiness lies in being united, —keep united, my children: this is the only serious, true, good, and real thing in life. I love you, and my thoughts are with you, my beloved daughter.

When you receive the *Burgraves* you will see on pages ninety-six and ninety-seven some lines I could not bear to listen to at the rehearsals, for the first few days after your departure. I used to go into a corner and cry like a child, or like a father as I am. There! I do love you dearly, my poor little Didine.

Your mother reads me your letters. Write good

long ones. We live your life with you. As for me, I can hardly write. Many kisses for you, love to your husband, and my warmest regards to Mme. Lefèvre.—Your loving father,

V.

To CHARLES VACQUERIE.

23rd March [1843].

Here is a letter, my dear Charles, that I have written to your good mother. Be so kind as to give it to her. I have just this moment received yours; many thanks for it. I am glad that my daughter makes you happy amid the grief which overwhelms you. She is a dear sweet child; she is worthy of you; you are worthy of her. Always love each other. Everything lies in that one word.—Yours, with much affection,

V. H.

To MADAME VACQUERIE-HUGO.

PARIS, *21st April* [1843].

Never say that I forget you, my beloved daughter, even in fun. If I do not write often, the reason perhaps is that I am thinking too much about you. I have often

long delightful conversations with you, without you knowing it; in the silence of the night I send you blessings from here which reach you, I am sure, and make you sleep better, and be more loved. As I have already told you, you receive letters of this kind at every moment.

As for the other kind of letters, those written on paper and carried by the post, they are so cold in comparison, so imperfect, so dimmed by all the shadows which life casts! Truly, my beloved daughter, I do not write to you, because I think too much of you. Make what you like of this, but it is so. Above all, never say that your father forgets you.

Your mother reads all your nice little letters to me. They are bright and sweet. They bring us an echo of your happiness. Dear child, be happy, make your husband happy; cultivate your mutual happiness, both of you, with unremitting love.

Before long, next month, your mother, Dédé, and Toto will join you. I shall remain alone in Paris, where I am still kept by endless work, business, and worries. Think of me sometimes, then, all of you, and also of dear old Charlie, who is an exile like me.

I for my part shall think of you, and wish you every happiness and every joy. Present my kind regards to Mme. Vacquerie and Mme. Lefèvre. Give my best love to your husband, and then always love your father, who loves you so much.

22nd May [1843].

Your happiness is mine, my darling Didine, and every time I get one of your nice little letters, full of such serene happiness, I thank God. My best love to your dear good husband. I thank him for making you happy.

I am living here, my dear child, in the greatest solitude, my mind full of you all, for it is of you I think when I work. I walk about all day under the trees of the forest of Vincennes, with the old keep to look at, and occasionally a peasant or a road-mender for a companion, and composing poetry all the time.

I shall remain in Paris as long as possible on Charles' account, and also for the sake of your good old friend, Mlle. Louise Bertin, who will, I hope, get a Monthyon prize. I have set things going, and I must now keep my eye on the hostile party in the Academy until the matter is settled.

Your mother has given me a thousand delightful details about your home. You had already told me some. She has completed the picture. I can see your little room in my mind's eye—your furniture, all well chosen and arranged, the drawings, the curiosities, the portraits, and my Didine looking fresh and happy in the midst of all these pretty things.

I embrace you and I love you, my child. What happiness it will be to see you again! Think of me, write to me. Do not forget, you have still the same place in my heart and in my life. Here is another kiss for you.

TO THE CHILDREN

13th June [1843].

My eyes are very bad, my darling child, as I write. I must work, but it makes my eyes worse. Your sweet letter delighted me. My dream and my reward after this year of hard work is to join you all. But I cannot yet say when it will be. I must travel somewhere first, either to the Pyrenees or to the Moselle—a trip for health to do my eyes good; for work too, as you know, like all my journeys. Afterwards, when I have gathered my spoils and bound up my sheaf, I shall come and see you all, my dear ones. I am entitled to this reward.

I spent yesterday, Sunday, with Charles in the country, on an island in the Marne—an excursion arranged by kind Doctor Parent, which amused and rested us. Tell your dear mother Charles is hard at work; tell her also that I have just had a nice little letter from her, which I will soon answer.

I wrote a short time ago to your good husband to recommend him an architect; but the contract for the work at the theatre has been given out, and I presume the bearer of my letter did not think it worth while to go to Havre. Give my best love to your Charles. I will soon write to him too.

The fortune-teller did really read everything word for word, but with great difficulty and in a very confused and indistinct way. The papers have greatly exaggerated the affair. I will tell you all about it. But the fact is none the less strange, and suggests curious reflections.

Good-bye till we meet, my darling daughter. Write to me often. Write also to Mlle. Bertin, who has written

to you and has not had an answer from you. *I beg you to do this.* She is so fond of you. I send you a fond kiss. I send kisses to all of you. Be very happy, my own dear ones!

My love to Auguste Vacquerie and to M. Regnauld.

PARIS, 18*th July* [1843].

I am still in Paris, my beloved daughter. Your dear mother will explain the reason to you. But I am leaving soon, and when you receive this letter think lovingly of your poor father, who will be travelling southwards far from you. If you only knew, my daughter, what a baby I am when I think of you; my eyes fill with tears; I should like never to be parted from you. The sight of your happiness the other day charmed me. Your husband is kind, gentle, tender, amiable, and intelligent; love him with all your heart; I love him too. The day I spent at Havre is a bright spot in my memory; I shall never forget it as long as I live. You do not know what it cost me to refuse you all! But it was necessary. I left with a heavy heart. And in the morning, as I passed the docks, I looked up at the windows of the room where my dear Didine lay asleep; I blessed you, and I prayed to God for you with my whole heart. May you be happy, my daughter, always happy, and I shall be happy. I shall be with you in two months. In the meanwhile write to me; your mother will tell you where. I embrace you over and over again.

V.

I must thank you, my dear Charles, for making her so happy. The day I spent with you enchanted me. I saw my daughter made happy by you, and you by her. Remember, my children, this is the true paradise. Live in it, both of you, till death.

I leave for the south to-day. My wife will tell you about the business and bothers which kept me eight mortal days in Paris. In two months we shall all be together again. Be happy during that time; it is all I ask of you.

My kindest regards to your good brother, and my respectful compliments to Mme. Lefèvre. If God rewarded her as she deserves, she would be as happy as you are.

My love to you, dear Charles. V.

BIARRITZ, 26*th July*.

I can look at the sea here as I can at Havre, but without you, my beloved daughter. I walk on the beach, I admire the fine rocks, but you are not here to walk with me or admire with me. I do not feel the gentle pressure of your arm on mine. Nature is always beautiful, my child, but it has no meaning when those we love are absent.

I came here by sea from La Rochelle, and, as I note for your mother's benefit, when I reached Biarritz I read in some papers that I was at Bordeaux, and in others that I was in Switzerland.

I could spend the rest of my life here, if only you were all with me, it is such a charming place—sea and sky, a beautiful rocky coast-line, which makes the rising tide look just like a storm. But none of you are with me, and I am quite at a loss. I am working very hard, which occupies my mind if it does not fill my heart.

Give my love to your dear husband, and write to me, my darling child. Your mother will give you my address. My kind regards to Mme. Lefèvre. My love to Auguste Vacquerie. I embrace you again and again.

SAN-SEBASTIAN, 31*st July*.

You are now one of my children, my dear Charles, and so I am writing to you to-day. I am in Spain, if the province of Biscay can be called Spain. The country is beautiful, but there are an enormous number of fleas. When you go to bathe, you bring them back from the sea.

I hope you are all well at Havre, and that my little "Madame" continues to be the prettiest and happiest Havraise in the world. I hope your brother Auguste is writing by the seashore those fine poems with which nature, in her grand aspects, inspires a mind like his. I hope Mme. Lefèvre is spending the summer near you, and finding peace and consolation. In a word, I hope that God is vouchsafing to you all that I ask of Him for you—health, happiness, prosperity, and joy.

My best love to you. V.

TO THE CHILDREN

I am finishing to you, my darling daughter, the letter begun to your husband. I do not seem to be changing my correspondent. You two are one in heart.

Enclosed you will find two drawings: one is for you, the other for Toto. You must each choose the one you like. Next time I will send one to Dédé. I beg her to excuse me till then. My eyes are still rather bad, and besides, the beautiful Spanish sky has been hidden by a good deal of mist the last four days, and these two drawings show the effect of it.

I hope you are having fine weather down at Havre. I am studying the Basque language, and I walk on the beach. I never see the waves breaking on the sand at my feet at nightfall, without thinking that there is only a pond between you and me. Alas! this pond is the ocean.

However, my journey is most interesting. It is just the time to see Spain. I am keeping up my diary. You shall read it all some day.

Go on writing to Paris. And here is a kiss for you, my own darling daughter.

1st August.

I have just heard that the post in this wild country does not leave for France till to-morrow, the 2nd of August. So I reopen my letter, and take the opportunity of writing you a few more lines. A bit of paper to fill up is like a few moments' respite before saying

good-bye. It is too good a chance to be neglected. Let us have a few minutes' more chat, then, my darling little daughter. I think I see your sweet eyes fixed on me, and seeming to say—*Yes, dear daddy!*

But while I go on like this, my paper is getting filled up; I have only a small space left. Tell your dear mother I have just written to Charles. I hope the end of the year will bring him success. Dear child, I wish the next six weeks were over, and that I had you all together in my arms and on my knees.

One of the two drawings represents Port du Passage, a delightful place about two leagues from here.

TOLOSA, *9th August* [1843].

On sitting down to write, I say to myself it is Dédé's turn to-day, so I write to Dédé, then I write to Didine, then I write to Toto. It is always everybody's turn. You see, my darling daughter, a letter without a line for you would not really reflect my heart. I am always thinking of you, and so I must always write to you.

I am continuing my journey in a wonderful and little-known country. I was the first to say that Spain was another China. No one has an idea of what there is in Spain. I am ashamed to visit such a small corner of it, and to leave it so quickly. One would want not days but weeks, not weeks but months, not months but years, to see it properly. I have only seen a few mountains, and I am astounded.

I will tell you all about this, my beloved daughter, when I am at Havre, and when you come to Paris. It will be the subject of our after-dinner talks, you know —those pleasant talks which were one of the delights of my life. We will have some more. For though I am quite content that you should be happy without me, I cannot be happy without you. I embrace your husband, then you, then him, and you once more.

V.

PIERREFITTE, 15*th August* [1843].

If you could have seen me, my darling daughter, when I opened your letter, you would have been pleased, for I know I feel how much you love me. I should like you to have witnessed my joy. I had been so long without news of you all!

You are right. God ought to bring Havre and the Place Royale to Biarritz. The sky and sea are in perfect beauty there, and we should be enjoying perfect happiness.

I am now in the Pyrenees — another wonderful country. I am going to drink some sulphur waters for the rheumatism I suffered from last year. All my time, however, is spent in admiration. How beautiful nature is! One cannot move from one place to another without being in raptures at every step. The day before yesterday I saw the sea, yesterday I saw Spain, and to-day I see the mountains. All are equally beautiful, but in different ways.

Let us admire, my darling daughter, but let us remember that it is better to love than to admire. Above all, let us love. I need not say this to you, who are surrounded with every kind of love. Tell your Charles I was delighted with his little note. I know he has a noble heart and a lofty mind. You will always understand each other. To understand one another is to love one another. I embrace you with the fondest affection. In a month!

Continue to write to *Paris*. My love to Auguste Vacquerie.

LUZ, 25*th August* [1843].

I have described in a letter to your mother, my darling daughter, the tour I am making in these mountains. On the back of this letter I am sending you a rough sketch, which will give you an idea of what I see every day; it all strikes me as beautiful, and would seem far more so, dear child, if I saw it with you. You will be surprised to hear that the sort of ruin you see at the foot of the mountain is not a ruin, but a rock. The Pyrenees are full of these curious boulders, which look like ruined buildings. The Pyrenees themselves, by the way, are simply one enormous ruined edifice. The two white patches you see in the middle of the mountains are snow. On some of the Pyrenean mountains, and on the Vignemale especially, snow finds its level like the ocean.

TO THE CHILDREN

I am drinking the waters, but my eyes are still bad. It is true, I work very hard—I may say unceasingly. But that is my life. Working is doing something for you all.

You have now two Charlies to make you happy. In a short time you will have your father as well. So continue to get fatter, to be merry, and to keep well. Be happy, my child. You are just the age for it.

I have begged your mother to remember me to Mme. Lefèvre and Mme. Regnauld. I send you and your Charles my fondest love.

Write now to Poste Restante, La Rochelle.

Remind your dear mother, who is a little *absent* at times, that she must write to me in future to *La Rochelle.*

LETTERS TO VARIOUS PERSONS

1817

To MONSIEUR RAYNOUARD, *Perpetual Secretary of the French Academy.*

PARIS, 31*st August* 1817.

DEAR SIR,—A slight indisposition prevents me from having the honour of going in person to express my gratitude for the favour which the French Academy has deigned to confer on me by according an honourable mention to the piece No. 15 of which I am the author. Having heard that you have raised doubts as to my age, I take the liberty of enclosing my certificate of birth. It will prove to you that the line,

> Moi, qui. . . .
> De trois lustres à peine ai vu finir le cours,

is not a poetic fiction.

If there were time to insert my name in your report printed by order of the Academy, it would greatly increase the gratitude I owe you, and of which I beg you to accept the proof in the form which your encouragement has so greatly endeared to me, and which must, for so many reasons, be still more dear to you.

I trust you will be kind enough, dear sir, after having

taken note of it, to return me my birth certificate to No. 18 Rue des Petits Augustins.

I beg you to accept the assurance of the profound respect with which I have the honour to be, dear sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

VICTOR-MARIE HUGO.

À Raynouard, auteur des Templiers.

O Raynouard, toi qui d'un Ordre Auguste
Nous traças en beaux vers le châtiment injuste;
Qui, dédaignant l'amour et ses molles douleurs,
Sur l'austère vertu nous fis verser des pleurs;
Toi qui bientôt encor, dans tes fécondes veilles
Des exploits de Judas[1] nous diras les merveilles;
Pardonne! interrompant de si nobles travaux,
Un jeune élève de Virgile
Ose de sa Muse inhabile
T'addresser les accords nouveaux.

Il te doit tout; c'est toi dont l'indulgence
Sut arracher au gouffre de l'oubli
Son faible essai dans l'ombre enseveli,
De sa Muse accueillant l'enfance,
Tu fis plus; tu voulus, dans le sénat des arts
Sur elle attirer les regards.
Ces vers sans art échappés à ma veine
D'un tel honneur étaient dignes à peine;
Mais que ne pouvaient sur les cœurs
Cet amour que Virgile a peint en traits vainqueurs,
Le souvenir d'Élise abandonnée,
D'un triste hymen invoquant les vains droits
Et réclamant contre l'ingrat Énée
L'appui des Dieux qui l'ont seuls condamnée?
Que ne pourrait le charme de ta voix?
De cette voix dont la mâle énergie,
Quand la patrie en deuil redemandait ses vois,
Déployant des vertus l'éloquente magie,
Apprit au tyran même à respecter nos lois?

[1] The young poet meant "Juda."

C'est à ta voix encor, c'est à son harmonie
Qu'est dû tout le succès de mon humble génie;
Ce qui fait mon bonheur fait aussi mon orgueil,
Virgile et toi protégiez ma faiblesse;
Ces vers nouveaux que je t'addresse
Recevront-ils le même accueil?
Dans le sein de Virgile ils n'ont point pris naissance,
Ton organe flatteur n'a pas accru leur prix;
Mais ils sont inspirés par la reconnaissance,
Et c'est pour toi qu'ils sont écrits.

1820

To MONSIEUR ADOLPHE TREBUCHET, *Nantes.*

PARIS, *20th April* 1820.

I am following Abel's example, my dear cousin, and I begin by dropping all ceremony, because I hope that our relationship, which excuses familiarity, will soon be reinforced by friendship, which authorises it. Indeed, when I reflect that your kind and affectionate letter is dated the 14th of March, and that I am replying to it on the 20th of April, I confess I am ashamed of the delay; and the reason which my brother Abel gives you for it, good as it is, does not reassure me so much as my confidence in your friendship and in the indulgence of your family.

Even if we could have doubted it, your letter would have proved to us, dear Adolphe, that you are a royalist

like ourselves. We congratulate you on this, and we regret we are not Bretons born, like you, for we are all Vendéens at heart. I hear that you and I are about the same age, and I congratulate myself on this too; it is another point of resemblance between us.

Farewell, my dear Adolphe; I hope that our kind relations at Nantes will read the *Conservateur littéraire* with indulgence, and that you will soon give us news of all the family, and especially of my aunt, whose state of health causes us much uneasiness. Mamma has been very poorly and languid for the last year, but is now getting somewhat better.

Remember me to my cousins, whom I have never seen, but for whom I have always felt a fraternal affection.—Your affectionate cousin,

V.-M. HUGO.

29th May 1820.

It is a strange effect of misfortune that we should already have to discharge the most sacred duties of a friendship of which we have barely formed the first ties, and that we should be required to condole with a family we have never seen, on the death of a relative we have never known. We all go on our way in this wretched life at a distance from each other; we love each other without ever having met, and often (the sad event which has deprived us of an aunt proves it but too well) we lose those we love before they have even smiled on us.

You see, my friend, that your letter has engendered very painful reflections in my mind. Forgive my ramblings, and, above all, pray forget that I have been selfish enough to speak to you of my grief before thinking of alleviating yours. I feel strongly the extent of the loss which you have just suffered, and I can only sympathise with your distress. It is said that sympathy renders sorrow less acute; if so, dear friend, no sorrow has ever been more truly sympathised with than yours.

Do not, I implore you, give way to despair, Adolphe; be a man! Think of your good father, of your sisters. Rest assured you will see your mother again; it is impossible that we can part like this for ever. You are pious, and your piety will give you courage.

Forgive this incoherent letter, and love me as I love you. With best love, your attached cousin,

V.-M. HUGO.

To GASPARD DE PONS.

My friend, I know not what reply
To make you for your pleasing lines,
Pleasing, but spoilt by flattery.
The learned fountain has run dry,
Phœbus is deaf, the wingèd steed
Is old, and only soars on high
To find his stall and evening feed.

TO VARIOUS PERSONS

Go on; pursue your fancy's bent;
Let the Graces have your life,
To the Muses give your leisure;
Sing of Hymen and its strife,
Sing of Love and all its pleasure;
Follow on poetic wing
The sentimental amorous crew,
But try to raise a gayer strain;
The Sisters Nine will scarce disdain
Your suit, nay, victory must ensue
In the end, for ribald tongues maintain
That the chaste Maids with favour view
Poets of somewhat wanton vein.
I wait for death, with unconcern,
Whether it early come or late;
A passing guest, resigned to fate,
Not knowing when 'twill be my turn
From life's great banquet to adjourn;
What matter if I quit the scene
Like Chatterton, who at eighteen
Passed to the undiscovered bourne?
May Heaven release me from this coil
Of suffering mortality.
Your Muse, my friend, will give me life,
If my Muse makes me die.

To MONSIEUR ADOLPHE TREBUCHET.

PARIS, 11*th July* 1820.

It is a settled thing, my dear Adolphe, that I shall always have to apologise to you, and you to excuse me. Rest assured that, when my replies to your letters are so long in coming, the reason is that time is lacking, and not goodwill. As for you, my dear cousin, as you doubtless have more leisure than I have, pray devote as much as you can of it to our correspondence.

I am very selfish in asking you to do this, but you must put it down to the pleasure which your letters give us. I, for my part, thank you for the interesting details you have been good enough to send me about the noble peasants of La Vendée, and for those contained in your letter of the 3rd of July about the Trappists of Meillerey. Your description of this abbey does credit to your heart and to your head. Continue, my dear Adolphe, to let us share in your expeditions in this way until we can do so in reality.

There is much talk of the dissolution of the Chamber. The Minister Siméon, who wants to go on with his jobbery, is strongly opposed to a measure which would bring in a royalist majority. It is said that Decazes has received the *Cordon Bleu*, and that he will not wear it until the coronation of George IV. Three weeks ago the Ministry was offered to M. de Villèle, who refused it.

The unfortunate affair of the Duc de Richelieu and General Donnadieu has apparently been hushed up. As

there were no eye-witnesses, nobody knows what to make of it.

Farewell, my good cousin; I leave the rest of this letter to Abel, who wants to send you a few lines. Eugène will answer your letter to-morrow. We are in the throes of a move which obliges mamma to put off the answer which she hoped to send to your father's letter, and to ask me to convey all her thanks. Farewell once more, take care of yourself, give my respects to your father, and my compliments to your sister. With kind love, your faithful friend,

V.-M. HUGO.

P.S.[1]—As Abel has mentioned the departure of His Majesty Duc Decazes to you, I will tell you a curious and little-known fact connected with it. The papers announced that he had left on the 10th at *four o'clock in the afternoon*, whereas, in reality, he went off *before daybreak*. The reason of this is, that the Duchesse Decazes had insisted on her husband starting before Mme. Crinstot (the duke's sister), whom she wishes to deprive of the honour of a triumphal entry into London. Mme. Crinstot is in tears. It was she who did not leave Paris till *four o'clock*. Discord, it appears, has crept into the honourable family, and war has broken out.

I had these details from a *noble peer*, who had them from a good authority: you may consider them *authentic*.

[1] Postscript to Abel Hugo's letter.

To MONSIEUR ADOLPHE TREBUCHET.

21st September 1820.

All my friends complain of me, my dear Adolphe; they call me lazy, careless, ungrateful. But you know that I have not as much leisure as I should like, and that if I had the time to write to you whenever I wish to do so, you would receive a daily record of my sayings and doings at Nantes. However, the time will soon come when we shall not want a bit of paper and a long interval to exchange ideas and assure each other of our mutual affection.

Hasten, my dear friend, that time which your cousins in Paris are so much looking forward to. Remember that the beginning of the term makes it necessary for you to be here by the 1st of November at the latest: follow your affection, and come sooner. We all want so much to see you and embrace you! . . . Beg your good father and our kind cousin to forgive these selfish entreaties, and to put them down not to egoism, but to our warm affection for you. Farewell, Adolphe; write soon, and come soon. We all send you our kindest love.—Your friend and cousin,

V.-M. HUGO.

We are still expecting the destruction or *the salvation of the Monarchy*, viz., Madame de Berri's *child.*

TO VARIOUS PERSONS

1821

To MONSIEUR LE COMTE ALFRED DE VIGNY,
5th Regiment of the Royal Guards, Rouen.

[1821.]

Your letter, Alfred, was written on the 18th, and I am answering it on the 21st! We are separated by three days only, and these three days are like three years; distance is nothing—it is the separation that matters. Thirty leagues, which prevent us from seeing each other, separate us as much as a thousand. One must be with one's friends to enjoy them. Once parted from them, the amount of the distance is of no account. Therefore, my dear friend, the only consolation I derive from your place of exile being near me, is that you will come back from it all the quicker. However, our separation is enough to make me melancholy, and I assure you that I should pity those who survived you if the sun that rose on your grave was no brighter than the friend you have left behind you.

Your letter found me here, overdone, wearied, worried, and, what is worse than all, dull; you can imagine what an impression it made on me, and what a happiness it was to me. I read it over again, word by word, as a beggar counts the coins one by one in the purse which he has picked up. I saw with delight that you have not forgotten me, as you write to me, and that you are doing something better than thinking of me, as you are

composing poetry. But that, again, is terribly tantalising; —what! we are only thirty leagues apart, and I shall not have a chance of hearing these lines. Why don't we have roots instead of feet, since we are fixed like wretched plants to a spot which we cannot leave? Why are our aspirations, our desires, our affections removed so far from us, if we are doomed never to follow them? My dear friend, solve the question, and I will put you some more, for the cup of bitterness is inexhaustible.

I think you must have monopolised all the inspiration this month, for I have not had any for a single moment. I have written nothing. The Government asked me for some lines on the baptism [of the Duc de Bordeaux], which I shall not write unless I get an inspiration. You are a lucky man, Alfred; you never strike the rock in vain, and when you have turned out some hundreds of splendid verses you call them lines, to console those of your friends who cannot even produce any lines which they would call verses.

I had, however, begun a story which amused me but for the trouble of writing it, then came this request about the baptism of the Duc de Bordeaux, and then bothers about the fusion of the *Conservateur littéraire* and the *Annales*. I have let the whole thing slide.

Lefèvre is still undecided, Soumet is writing some superb poetry, Pichot is looking for his manuscript, Émile [Deschamps] goes on promising us *Le Fou du Roi*, Gaspard [de Pons] is making merry at Versailles, Rochet is weeping at Grenoble, by the bedside of his father, who is dangerously ill, Saint-Valry is spending Easter at

Montfort; all of them love you and embrace you, but none more tenderly than I do.

It is very disagreeable, Alfred, to be able to communicate by letter only. Here I am compelled to stop for want of paper. Is it really worth while to travel about, in order to exchange ideas without getting an answer, to intrude upon one's friend's gay thoughts with melancholy remarks, like two instruments which answer each other from far-off with different airs, because the distance prevents those who are playing on them from striking up the same one? Farewell, I embrace you, ashamed of having told you so little, and tired of having put so many words on paper.

Abel's [Hugo] meetings at the *Bonnes lettres* are a great success. I have not read or had anything read since *Quiberon.* I had a charming letter from M. de Chateaubriand, in which he told me this ode *moved him to tears*; I repeat this praise to you, my friend, because it will convince you as well—you who possess the official record of the interment of this work. What is it by the side of your adorable *Symétha*? I regret that I cannot return your charming mark of friendship by signing myself *Alfred*; but, at all events, as you sign yourself *Victor*, I am sure that that name will be always illustrious.—Your affectionate friend,

VICTOR.

Abel will write to you immediately; he is delighted with your letter. If I go to Roche-Guyon, it cannot be before the month of August.

To MONSIEUR LE COMTE JULES DE RESSÉGUIER,
at Toulouse.

July 1821.

MY DEAR COLLEAGUE,—You may have read of my terrible misfortune in the papers. I have lost my mother.

I should have long ago had to reproach myself for not having responded to all your kind marks of friendship had it not been for her illness and death.

You did not know my noble mother, of whom I do not speak, because I could not speak of her as she deserves; but I am sure you will sympathise with my grief, and if your pity for me equals my affection for you, it will be great indeed.—Your devoted servant and colleague,

VICTOR-M. HUGO.

To MONSIEUR LE COMTE ALFRED DE VIGNY,
Officer in the 5th Regiment of the Royal Guards, at Rouen.

DREUX, *20th July* 1821.

You will have no idea, my good Alfred, where this letter is written from; I am at Dreux, that is to say, not far from you, without, however, being able to join you. This is how it happens that my weary, exhausted frame is now in this ancient Druidical country. One of my friends, who is starting for Corsica, and who just at

present is living in a villa between Dreux and Nonancourt, asked me to spare him a few days, and as he was leaving so soon I did not refuse.

So here I am since yesterday, seeing Dreux, and making arrangements to go on to Nonancourt.

I walked the whole way, under a burning sun, and without a bit of shade.

I am very tired, but very proud of having done twenty leagues on foot. I look on all carriages with contempt; if you were with me at this moment, you could not see a more conceited biped. When I think that Soumet must have a cab to take him from the Luxembourg to the Chaussée d'Antin, I am tempted to believe myself a superior being to him, from an animal point of view. This experience has taught me that one's legs are made to walk with.

I owe a great deal to this journey, Alfred; it has cheered me a little; I was tired of that dull house. I am alone here, but I was alone there too. Only my present isolation has something more material about it.

I spent a day at Versailles with our good friend Gaspard. You have written to him; perhaps you wrote to me too, and your letter may have arrived in Paris during my absence, to give me pleasure on my return. I like to think of this. I hope you have not forgotten the fine poetry that you promised me. Dear Alfred, you are a lucky man, and a poet; I simply vegetate.

The only ruin here is that of the *château* of Dreux; I went to see it yesterday evening, and I shall do so again this morning, and have a look at the cemetery. I was pleased with the ruins. Fancy old flint towers,

covered with lime, of different sizes, with ruined battlements, and connected by large walls in which time has made still more breaches than storming-parties; amidst all this, corn and lucern growing, and above it a telegraph, by the side of which the mortuary chapel of the Orléans family is being constructed.

This white unfinished chapel contrasts with the black ruined fortress; it is a tomb rising on the débris of a palace. From the foot of the telegraph-tower you can see wooden crosses, weather-beaten stones, and clumps of trees in the western valley: this is the cemetery. In the eastern valley is the town. The two valleys therefore have a different population.

There are no Druidical monuments. Dreux gave its name to the Druids, and they have left no traces there. I am sorry for them, for the town, and for myself.

The banks of the little river, in which I bathed on my arrival here, are very pretty; I was walking there just now under the aspens and birches, and I thought of all our friends who are together in the great valley, and are all perhaps forgetting us.

But you, Alfred, who are alone like myself, you thought of me, did you not, while I was thinking of you in my sadness and isolation?

Farewell, this letter is merely to let you know that I am still in the land of the living, and to prove to you that you have a friend who is trying to make light of misfortune, who thinks like a man, and walks like a horse.

My love to you; take care of yourself, and write to me.—Your devoted friend,

VICTOR.

TO VARIOUS PERSONS

To MONSIEUR TREBUCHET, *Chief of the Secretariate and of the Archives at the Prefecture, Nantes.*

31st October 1821.

MY DEAR UNCLE,—It is a long time since I thought of writing to you to claim our Adolphe. Now that our tiresome move is nearly over, I am able to tell you that our fourth brother will live with me and Eugène on the second floor of the house, of which we inhabited the ground floor and the first floor. Our new apartment consists of two fine rooms with fireplaces, and the rent is only two hundred francs. Abel lives in a third floor in the next street, so it is almost as if he were living with us. His rooms are larger than ours, so they will be of use for entertaining our friends this winter. Adolphe will find everyone here as full of affection for him as we are; they have often spoken of him to us, and have a most pleasant recollection of his wit and his amiability, and, like me, they look forward to his return with impatience. The day on which my good Adolphe arrives will be a very happy one for me, and I have so few that I really have the right to count them.

The day when I shall be able to see you as well, my dear uncle, will indeed be one of the best, and is already one of the most wished for in my life. Let us hope it may come soon, and that the Providence which has taken our beloved mother from us will not keep us long separated from our dear kind uncle.

My dear mother loved Adolphe as much as we do;

we do not ask the same favour from his father, as we are not nearly so deserving of it.

We read all you were good enough to send us with the deepest interest, especially that in which we recognised your practised pen. I read your article on the antiquities of Brittany to some *savants*, who were equally struck by its scientific research and the author's literary ability.

Farewell, my dear uncle; I am sorry to leave off writing to you, but business always comes in the way of pleasure. With my love, I beg you to believe me to be, your devoted nephew,

VICTOR.

My brothers beg me to send you their affectionate regards.

Adolphe, make haste and pack up!

To COUNT JULES DE RESSÉGUIER, *at Toulouse.*

7th November 1821.

MY DEAR COUNT AND COLLEAGUE,—I should really be too much ashamed to write to you again, if my conscience were not set at rest by all the worries which have hitherto prevented me from answering your kind and affectionate letter. You must pity me for all the suffering I have gone through, and all the troubles that have come upon me. Why should our great sorrows be always

followed by a crowd of petty annoyances and paltry vexations which do not even allow us to rest in despair? I have had many experiences of this kind, my dear good friend (allow me to use this title which you have bestowed on me, and which I value most highly); I have climbed every rung of the ladder of misfortune, and yet in my greatest troubles, as well as in my most tedious cares, I have never thought without real delight of the consolations of your friendship, which I deserve so little, but to which I cling as if I did deserve it. For the last six months domestic troubles and family affairs have inflamed and aggravated a wound which will long continue to bleed. You never knew my noble and admirable mother, my dear colleague; you are not aware of what I have lost; but you cannot imagine anything which would surpass the truth.

I do not think you have been angry with me for a moment for my long silence. You are so kind, your consideration for me is so delicate and so generous, that I should not have apologised if it had not been a relief to me to do so.

I take advantage of an opportunity given me by our dear A. Soumet to send you with this letter three volumes of the *Conservateur littéraire*; it is one of my own copies, and I beg you will excuse its rough exterior. I am much vexed at the neglect which has made you wait so long for these unlucky volumes. I would have sent them sooner if I had been up to anything, but I am good for nothing but to love you.

You have doubtless written some pretty verses that I have not seen; if you would be so kind as to send me

some of them, I should take it as a favour and as a great mark of your friendship.

Farewell, my dear colleague; allow me to believe myself to be and to subscribe myself the most devoted of your friends.

VICTOR.

My respectful compliments, if you please, to the Countess.

1822

To COUNT JULES DE RESSÉGUIER, *at Toulouse.*

17th January 1822.

MY DEAR COUNT AND COLLEAGUE,—I take advantage of a quiet leisure moment to inquire about your health and your friendship; both are of great value to me, and I really do not know which I prize most. If you were to ask me which, I could only answer like the child who said, "*I like them both best.*"

Alexander, who is still unwell or lazy, has, however, finished his *Saül*, which I prefer to his *Clytemnestre*, which again I prefer to everything that has appeared on the French stage for the last fifty years. I am looking forward impatiently to the performance of

one or other of these fine tragedies, which is fixed for the month of March at the latest. I should much like to see *Saül* acted first: this thoroughly original work as stern as a Greek play and as interesting as a Germanic drama, would at once show Soumet in all his grandeur. The day which witnesses Alexander's triumph will be a glorious one for me.

I shall perhaps send the Academy this year an ode on *Le Dévouement dans la Peste* for one of its public meetings; at all events, it will not contain any political views.

And you, my dear colleague, what are you doing in the land of the Troubadours? Soumet showed me some charming verses which you sent him lately. When I opened the *Almanach des Dames* I was greatly surprised to find in it your touching and graceful elegy, *La Consolation d'une mère*, which, with some lines by Soumet, made me forgive the editor for his indifferent choice of the other pieces in the collection.—Your devoted friend, and unworthy colleague and servant,

VICTOR-M. HUGO.

To THE ABBÉ DE LA MENNAIS.

PARIS, *17th May.*

I wanted to send you with my answer, my good friend, the collection of odes which I am now publishing; but there is some delay in printing them, and I feel I

must tell you how much your last letter delighted and consoled me. I have therefore decided to write to you without waiting for the book, which, however, will reach you quite soon enough.

It is a great charm to me to see your mind, so vigorous and profound in your works, become so gentle and intimate in your letters; and when I think that it is to me that you appear thus, I am quite proud. I should like someone to tell you what a blank your absence makes among those I love, and with what feelings of gratitude and eager joy I hear from you. When I read one of your letters, it seems to convey just the consolation I want for the pain I am feeling at the moment. The words of a friend have such power that they can alleviate every sorrow on every occasion. Simple and tender, they constitute the one universal remedy for the sufferings of the mind. And with whom can this truth be felt more strongly than with a friend like yourself?

You have confirmed me in the conviction I have long held, that a great man loves with his genius as he writes with his heart.

Thank you very much for the correction you have pointed out to me. You will see in my book if I am ready to take a hint. I only regret that you were not more severe, and did not oftener consult your excellent taste when you read these two odes. You would certainly have helped me to get rid of many blemishes, and this would have made me still more grateful to you. However, you will see from my numerous corrections that I have tried to make the work as free from faults as possible;

and you will, I know, be satisfied with these good intentions.

I am much touched by the interest you take in my business connected with the King's Household. I am now assured that the promises which have so long been dangled before me will be fulfilled in less than six weeks. I am eagerly awaiting the time which will settle my future, and enable me to live and be happy. So many material circumstances are often necessary for the realisation of the purest and the most ideal of dreams.

Farewell, dear and illustrious friend; write to me—your letters do me so much good! Let the remembrance of me be sometimes in your thoughts, and my name sometimes in your prayers.

VICTOR.

Pray tell me how the third volume of your admirable work is progressing.[1]

To COUNT JULES DE RESSÉGUIER, *at Lombez* (*Gers*).

PARIS, *26th May.*

I was in the country, my dear Jules, when your kind letter and charming ode reached me. I read this tender graceful little poem with keen pleasure and gratitude, and found only one stanza, or rather, only one word, *de trop* in it. But I value this stanza highly, because it

[1] *L'indifférence en matière de religion.*

proved that you sometimes thought of me, even in moments of poetic inspiration.

I carried out your instructions and sent the ode to Soumet, and showed him your letter, and it certainly was an excellent way of getting the delightful verses out of Michel which you ask me for; I will send them with my own collection, which will appear in a few days, and to which they will serve as an introduction.

In the collection is a short ode written some time ago, and addressed to the *Académie des Jeux Floraux*, in which you will find a faint resemblance to your *Clémence Isaure*. This coincidence has pleased me, and given me a better opinion of the lines.

Farewell, my dear friend; I received a letter from M. de la Martinière lately, enclosing a few lines from you; pray thank him for it. I have done all I could for his ode, but he owes me no thanks for this; I acted as if it had been for you. Farewell; thank you again for your verses; I like them; they convince me much more strongly of your friendship than of my own talents.

V.-M. H.

To MONSIEUR ADOLPHE TREBUCHET, *at Nantes.*

3rd September 1822.

I have been putting off my answer from day to day, my dear Adolphe, in order to be able to give you the

news of Mme. Foucher's confinement. After six weeks of great suffering she gave birth yesterday to a little girl with large black eyes. The courage displayed by dear Mme. Foucher was as great as her sufferings—and that is saying a good deal. She and the child are now going on very well. I have no doubt, my dear friend, that these details about a family whom you like, and who reciprocate the feeling, will interest you; that is why I hasten to send you them.

I hope very soon to have a still more interesting piece of news to give you, and I have no doubt that my Nantes father and brothers will rejoice in my happiness. It seems to me that it will be enhanced when I know that they share in it. . . . The article your kind father promises to write on my odes will certainly be most welcome to me, and I know beforehand that I shall find in it, besides his indulgence and affection, all the wit and elegance which distinguish his style. . . . Do not show your father this passage in my letter, for I might be accused of trying to influence my judge when I am only speaking the truth.

Now let us talk about you, dear Adolphe. The description you gave me of all your pleasures delighted me; for the moment I felt as if I shared them all. A day will soon come when, in order to do this, I shall not want you to tell me about them in your letters.

M. de la Mennais, who has come to Paris for a few days on business, has made me promise to go to Brittany next year: I had already promised others to do so. He told me a great deal about the monuments at

Locmariaquer and Carnac, etc.; and to see them with this illustrious friend would doubtless add greatly to the attraction of the journey; but I should also like to see them with you.

As for me, dear friend, my affairs are getting on, and I hope that by the first fortnight in October I shall attain to the great happiness of my life. Rejoice with me, Adolphe; you will find me a happy man indeed when you see me again. Tell my dear uncle how greatly I appreciate his affectionate and touching letters; tell all your family how much I love them, and how I long to see them. *You* know all this without my telling it you in a letter.

Farewell—my brothers send you their love, as I do; give a thought sometimes to your Paris brother.

VICTOR.

To COUNT JULES DE RESSÉGUIER, *at Toulouse.*

PARIS, *6th September* 1822.

What is this I hear from Durand, my friend? Can I believe this piece of good fortune? You are coming to Paris, and I know nothing of it, not even from you! Fortunately, I have a friend at Marseille to tell me what another very dear friend is doing at Toulouse. Anyhow, write to me, Jules, to confirm this good news, which I have already given Soumet as certain. I am apt to believe in what gives me pleasure.

Still, I do not believe everything in your kind letter; it was a delight to me to see that it was full of praise, because all this praise is dictated by your friendship for me. There is one confidence in this letter which touched me greatly. You refer to an angel whose acquaintance I had already made through our friend Alexander, of an angel who loves you, and whom I love the better for doing so.

I forwarded your letter to Guiraud, who had already started for Limoux when I received it. I did not venture to add a letter of my own to such a pleasing missive.

Soumet is going to have his plays acted almost simultaneously at both theatres, so that he will obtain a double triumph; he has made some very fine alterations in his masterpiece, *Saül.*

You will see! I promise you you will be as pleased with the beauty of the work as with the glory of the author. I consider *Saül* and *Clytemnestre* the two finest tragedies of the age, and in no way inferior to the masterpieces of our stage.

Farewell, my dear good friend. Soumet was delighted with your note. But he is going to write to you, and will tell you this much better than I can. As for me, I can only tell you how dear you are to me. Give my compliments to Mme. de Rességuier. If only you had started when this letter arrives! . . .

VICTOR.

To THE ABBÉ DE LA MENNAIS, at *la Chesnaie.*

1st October 1822.

I must write to you, my illustrious friend; I am about to be happy. Something would be wanting to my happiness if you were not the first to hear of it. I am going to be married. I wish more than ever that you were in Paris, to make the acquaintance of the angel who is about to convert all my dreams of virtue and bliss into reality. I have not ventured to speak to you before now of what absorbs my existence. My whole future was still unsettled, and I could not divulge a secret which did not belong exclusively to myself. Besides, I was afraid of shocking your lofty austerity by the avowal of an uncontrollable passion, although a pure and innocent one. But now that everything conspires to bestow on me a happiness after my own heart, I do not doubt that all your tender feelings will be interested in an attachment as old as myself, born in early childhood, and fostered by the first affection of youth.

VICTOR-M. HUGO.

TO VARIOUS PERSONS

1823

To MONSIEUR ADOLPHE TREBUCHET, *Nantes.*

22nd August 1823.

I have been intending to write to you for a long time, my dear Adolphe, but my paternal cares were followed by the worries of the christening. The delicate state of my wife's health having deprived her of the happiness of nursing her child, we were obliged to put it out to nurse. At first we placed it quite close to us; but the Parisian nurse, to whom we had entrusted it because she complied with the necessary physical conditions, unfortunately did not possess the required moral qualities. We were therefore compelled to take the child away from her; and my father, to whom we applied, sent us a splendid nurse from Blois, whom he will take back with him when he leaves Paris, and who will live in his house, be boarded and lodged with the household, and nurse the baby there. In this difficulty my father proved a true father to us.

As one of the founders of the *Muse française*, I was entitled to two subscriptions to it; I have given one to my own father, and the other to yours, who is a second father to me. Let me know if he has received the two first numbers of the publication, which I ordered to be sent to him. During our move from Gentilly I unfortunately mislaid the letter in which you told me the way to forward you the second edition of *Han*. Will you

kindly send me the address again? I will enclose a few prospectuses of the *Muse*, which I will ask you to distribute in Nantes.

This publication, to which the pick of our young writers contribute, such as Guiraud, Lamartine, Soumet, etc., is having an extraordinary success. It has already more than paid its expenses, and we hope to have 1500 subscribers in six months.

Farewell, my dear Adolphe; my father, my wife, Abel, and all the Foucher family love you and embrace you, as I do.

VICTOR.

Eugène's physical health is good, but as to the state of his mind . . . Still, Dr. Royer Collard has not given up all hope of restoring our dear patient to his right mind.

1824

To MONSIEUR Z., *Editor of the "Journal des Débats."*

DEAR SIR,—I see with real concern that you have misunderstood me both in point of form and in substance. I cannot imagine how you can have interpreted as a *command* my, as it seems to me, very polite request to you to publish my reply to your article, and, above all, how

you could have made an apology for my new odes out of what is only a somewhat mild refutation of your ingenious paradox on the classical and *romantic* schools.

You are good enough to promise to go through the new odes for a second and last time. I am flattered at being the object of so much attention on your part; but I own I expected more a rejoinder to my reply than a fresh article on these odes. I am not going to defend these compositions, which are so open to criticism in every respect; but I think that, when you have shown with great ease that my verses are bad, you will still have to prove that your literary theory on the classical and romantic school is not wrong; and that, allow me to tell you, dear sir, is the real point at issue.

Permit me also to tell you that I am not prepared to adopt the expression *romantic* until it has received a generally accepted definition. Mme. de Staël has defined it very well, and I abide by the meaning which she gives to it.

However this may be, I shall always congratulate myself, dear sir, on having given the public, even at my own expense, the opportunity of reading another article by you.

I also beg you to be kind enough to publish this letter in the *Journal des Débats*. The word *command* which dropped from your pen has given rise to a number of comments which you would not like me to suffer from, and I wish to let you have the pleasure of making reparation for the wrong you have involuntarily done me by declaring that my *commands* on this occasion consisted of simply sending my letter in the very form in which it

appeared in the *Journal des Débats*, with the exception of the fee for insertion.

V. H.

To THE COUNT FRANÇOIS DE NEUFCHÂTEAU, *of the French Academy, Rue Saint-Marc-Feydeau.*

15th November 1824.

DEAR SIR,—You have perhaps forgotten my name; but *I* shall never forget the kind way in which you were good enough to receive my first attempts. It is for a proof of this kindness that I now venture to ask you; and although it is not for myself, I shall value it as if it were so.

There is a vacancy in the French Academy; I certainly do not pretend to dictate a selection to a man of your unerring taste; I simply take the liberty of drawing your attention to a celebrated candidate who is a friend of mine, and whose first publications I saw you admire some years ago—M. Alphonse de Lamartine.

M. de Lamartine will take care to solicit your vote in person, and I have no doubt that his merit alone will obtain it from your kindly and enlightened impartiality; but I shall be glad to have contributed to your favourable decision. It would be adding, dear sir, a new and lively sentiment of gratitude to all the debt already owed you by, your most deeply devoted,

VICTOR HUGO.

TO VARIOUS PERSONS

To BARON D'ECKSTEIN.

Sunday, 28th November 1824.

I am always on the lookout, my dear sir, for the articles which you sometimes deign to contribute to the *Drapeau blanc*; and I can quite understand that they are sufficient to maintain the paper on the high level from which it ought never to descend. It is true that to ensure this all the contributors ought to possess your great ability, and that this would be asking an impossibility. Nothing is rarer than the union of the three qualities which so eminently distinguish you: talent, knowledge, and conviction.

The two articles you send me show with what ease and ingenuity your mind takes in every subject and adapts itself to every style. Your views on *popular poetry* are lofty and profound. You take a rapid and piercing glance at our sophistical and literary charlatans. Like an upright judge, you distinguish errors from tricks, you separate the wheat from the tares; and that is one of the things I admire in you. Your thoughts are marked by German profundity, and your pleasantry by French grace.

I shall hasten to show your excellent articles to Lamartine, who will be delighted with them; and I look forward impatiently to seeing your next work, which you are good enough to promise to send me.

Would you be kind enough to bear in mind the request I had the honour to make you for the Marchioness de Montferrier and her daughter, who are in Rome, and

whose two works you admired at my house? Will you let me know if the Minister for Foreign Affairs will allow these ladies to forward their correspondence in the bag of our Ambassador at Rome, with whom they have the honour of being acquainted? I shall hope to receive your reply for transmission to Mme. de Montferrier.

Farewell, dear sir; my wife is much pleased at your remembering her, and shares my high opinion of your talent; I hope you will always reckon me among your best friends.

VICTOR HUGO. ✓

To COUNT ALFRED DE VIGNY, *Captain in the Infantry Regiment in garrison at Pau.*

29th December 1824.

Before the year ends, dear Alfred, I will steal a moment of it for you, and by hook or by crook will write to you to-day. I do not know if my letter will be to you what yours are to me, but I derive courage, enthusiasm, and talent from them. When I receive them and read them over again, I feel better and greater. There is a kind of electricity in you, and my merit is to be able at times to come up to your level and keep in touch with you, especially as regards your play of mind and your affection.

What a beautiful letter your last one was! I could see everything—the grand scenes around you, and your

own fine genius; the lofty peaks of the Pyrenees must have inspired you with some admirable poetry, and I am longing to hear what you must have been writing every day.

We, my friend, shall have nothing to offer you in exchange when you return. Where you are, all is inspiration; here everything chills us. What is to be done amid all these political and literary worries, with these insolent mediocrities, these craven geniuses, the election of Droz, and the defeat of Lamartine and Guiraud? What can be done in Paris with the Ministry on one side and the Academy on the other? As for me, when I do come out of my cell I can only feel indignation and pity.

So I do not expose myself to it; I stay at home, where I am happy, where I rock my baby and have an angel for a wife. All my happiness is there; nothing reaches me from outside but some marks of friendship, which I value highly, and among which those from you come first.

You know how much I love you, Alfred. Let us join in greeting this new year, which makes our friendship older, but not our hearts. Send me some of the verses with which the Muse inspires you, and try to return quickly to write them here, even if you should, like me, run the risk of losing your inspiration.

But this is only a fanciful danger for you; your talent is proof against everything, even against grief and ennui. As for me, all my ideas take flight, and I am beaten directly I see interests and passions enter the lists. These little wounds are mortal to me. I am—

forgive the presumption of the comparison—like Achilles, vulnerable in the heel.

VICTOR.

1825

To BARON ECKSTEIN.

BLOIS, 29*th April* 1825.

DEAR SIR,—I have just this moment received a letter from M. Alphonse Rabbe, with his *Résumé de l'histoire de Russie.* This important work, which I have glanced at rapidly, appears to me, judging from what I see of it, to be as worthy of all your attention as the author is of all your esteem. M. Rabbe, whose political opinions differ from ours, is a man of fine talents and fine character. In these two important points he resembles you. Men of great merit, like you and him ought to understand and esteem each other, to whatever side they belong. Although they take part in the battles of their armies, generals do not engage in a hand-to-hand fight: they salute each other from their opposite ranks. You and M. Rabbe are both generals.

M. Rabbe, whose person and ability I admire, and who has no need of this recommendation to you, does you full justice already. You both belong to the small

band of honourable men who are, and ought to be, distinguished from the rabble of parties. M. Rabbe does not confound you with it.

You will, I am sure, do him the same justice. You will doubtless have received his *Résumé* and his letter by the time this reaches you, and I shall be glad to hear that your favourable verdict has anticipated what (I repeat) I must not call my recommendation.

It is therefore not so much with this object that I write as to recall myself to your kind recollection. You will have read in the papers of the favours with which His Majesty honours me.[1] I thank you beforehand for the pleasure which this news will have given you. You see, I am as sure of your friendship as you are of mine. No one has a greater esteem for you than your most devoted,

VICTOR HUGO.

My address is, *Care of General Count Hugo, at Blois.*

I should be delighted if you can find time to devote to M. Rabbe's work one of those excellent articles in which you know so well how to combine impartial criticism and appreciation. You know that my opinion on *Résumés* is the same as yours, but you also know that I do not include M. Rabbe in the common herd of superficial and ignorant writers of this stamp. He occupies quite a different position, and I am sure you will judge him as I do. While occasionally objecting to his doctrines, you will always admire his talent.

[1] The Cross of the Legion of Honour, and the invitation to the Coronation.

To COUNT ALFRED DE VIGNY, *Rue Richepanse, Paris.*

BLOIS, 28*th April* 1825.

I cannot allow you to hear from anyone but me, my dear Alfred, of the unexpected marks of favour which have followed me to my father's retreat. The King bestows the Cross of the Legion of Honour on me, and invites me to his Coronation. Rejoice at this news, you who love me, for I shall pass through Paris on my way to Reims, and I shall embrace you.

I expect to make the journey with our friend Nodier, to whom I have just written. How we shall miss you!

All honours, however, have their thorns. The journey obliges me to leave Adèle for a whole fortnight—Adèle, whom I love as you love your Lydia—and I feel as if this first separation would cut me in two.

You will feel for me, my friend, for you love as I do.

Until I leave again, I am staying here, in the most delightful town you can imagine. The streets and houses are dark and ugly, but, to gladden the eye, they are spread on both banks of the beautiful Loire; on one side is an amphitheatre of gardens and ruins, on the other a verdant plain. At each step one comes across a historical reminiscence.

My father's house is built of white quarried stones, with green outside shutters like those J. J. Rousseau was so fond of; it lies between two charming gardens, at the foot of a small hill between Gaston's tree and the towers of Saint-Nicholas. One of these towers has never been

completed, and is falling into ruin. Time is destroying it before man has finished it.

This is what I shall leave behind me for a fortnight, and, above all, my good old father and my beloved wife. But I shall see you for a minute or two, and the sight of a friend is so consoling!

Farewell, dear Alfred; kindest regards to your dear Lydia. Have you finished your formidable *Enfer*? It is like a page of Dante, or a picture by Michael Angelo, that triple genius.

My love to Émile, Soumet, Jules Guiraud, d'Hendicourt, and all my friends, to whom I will write when I have time. VICTOR.

I shall be here for three weeks longer. You will write to me soon, will you not? My address is—Blois, care of General Count Hugo.

My respectful compliments to your mother.

To MONSIEUR ADOLPHE DE SAINT-VALRY.

BLOIS, *7th May* 1825.

Yes, my friend, from this historic and picturesque town I shall often look towards Paris and Montfort, and the castle at Blois will not make me forget Saint-Laurent. I spent a delightful time there in August 1821, and your kind mother made me almost forget for the space of a week the admirable mother I had just lost.

Thank you for the news you give me. I am very pleased that good Jules Lefèvre owes the sale of his *Clocher de Saint-Marc* to your efforts. He has real ability, and all it wants is a success.

You have no lack of all this, my dear friend, and you are wrong to despair about yourself; your poem must, and shall be sold. The public is always quick to recognise real talent.

I am told here that it is said in Paris that I have abjured my *literary heresies*, like our great poet Soumet. Contradict this flatly wherever you may be; you will be doing me a service.

I went to see Chambord yesterday. You cannot imagine how singularly beautiful it is. Every enchantment, every kind of poetry, every *folly* even, are represented in the admirable quaintness of this palace of knights and fairies. I cut my name on the top of the highest tower; I took away a little stone and moss from it, and a piece of the framework of the window on which Francis I. wrote the two lines:

Souvent femme varie,
Bien fol qui s'y fie!

I value these two relics highly.

Farewell, my friend; you know that the King has invited me to his Coronation. I shall be in Paris about the 20th, and shall see you there.

The friendship of a man like you is delightful and invaluable,

VICTOR.

TO VARIOUS PERSONS

To PAUL FOUCHER.

LA MILTIÈRE, *9th or 10th of May* [1825].

I begin this, my dear Paul, with the intention of writing you one of the longest letters I have written since I left. If by any chance it should not come up to your expectation or mine, do not lay the blame on my intentions, but on some unexpected circumstance or other, which will have arisen to *cross my pleasure* and take up my time. Besides, we shall soon meet in Paris, and I will tell you everything I have not been able to write.

At this moment I am in a green arbour adjoining La Miltière; the ivy which grows up the sides casts a checkered shade on my paper, of which I send you a sketch, since you wish my letters to contain something picturesque. Do not laugh at these strange lines dashed on the other side of the page.[1] Have some imagination. Suppose this drawing to have been done by the sun and the shade, and you will see something charming. This is how the madmen called poets go on.

I left your kind letter at Blois, so that I cannot answer it in detail. Besides, you asked me more questions than the six black-coated pedants of the Faculty will put to you when you come up for your examination at the University of Paris.

You wrote about the *butte des Capucins* and Diana, and, to tease you, I have a great mind to talk of nothing but Chambord and Chabara.

[1] Some large lines with a curious outline are drawn on one page of the letter.

Fancy, my dear Paul, ever since I have seen Chambord, I go about asking everyone, "*Have you seen Chambord?*" just as La Fontaine, who said to everybody he met, "*Have you read Baruch?*"

À propos of La Fontaine, let us talk of Colonel Féraudy. He is still fond of you, although you took it into your head to pronounce one of his lines wrong—a point on which he is sensitive. He still writes fables; he has even written one in honour of me, in which he calls me a *beast*, and which ends with a pun. This is a compliment!

Farewell, my dear Paul; best love to your good father and mother from Adèle and me. Papa, his wife, and Didine send them and you a thousand kind messages.

To BARON TAYLOR.

Tuesday, 18th October 1825.

Have you, my dear colleague, promised your box for Thursday, or decided to give it to anyone, and could you, without the slightest inconvenience to yourself, let my wife have it? She has a great wish to see Talma and Mlle. Mars in *L'Ecole des Vieillards*, and the papers are advertising it for Thursday next.

When are you going to drop in and join our family dinner? You know what pleasure it will give us.

No one is more cordially devoted to you than myself.

VICTOR HUGO.

TO VARIOUS PERSONS

To MONSIEUR VILLARS, *Member of the French Academy.*

Sunday, 14th November [1825].

For the last two years, having been almost always absent from Paris, I have had no opportunity of cultivating M. Villars' agreeable and useful acquaintance as much as I should have wished. I am delighted that a fortuitous circumstance brings us together again, and enables me to renew this acquaintance which I value so highly. M. de Lamartine, a friend of mine, is a candidate for the vacant seat in the French Academy, and, before calling on M. Villars, he begged me to let the latter know beforehand. I told him that the kindly feeling of which M. de Villars had given me so many proofs would not in itself suffice to guide his choice, but I have no doubt that M. de Lamartine's great merit and admirable talents would be very strong recommendations to M. Villars. M. de Chateaubriand and the Bishop of Hermopolis are deeply interested in M. de Lamartine's election. M. Villars will doubtless be glad to add his vote to theirs, to facilitate the admittance of this talented man into the Academy, in which M. Villars himself occupies such a distinguished position.

I shall be happy and pleased at having drawn M. Villars' attention to M. de Lamartine; and if he is elected, it will add a fresh obligation to all those I owe to my old and worthy friend M. Villars. I shall have the honour to revert to the subject.

VICTOR HUGO.

1826

To LAMARTINE.

PARIS, 25*th May* 1826.

I wrote to you some time ago, my dear Lamartine, and sent you a new novel I have just published called *Bug-Jargal.* But you had doubtless left Florence when my long letter arrived there. I reminded you, besides, of the promise you made us at Saint-Point, on that happy day we spent with you there, to write some poetry for our *Album de quatre voyageurs,* as a compensation for your enforced absence. Everything is now ready for the publication of the album, Nodier's prose and my poetry; all that is lacking is its finest ornament, and it is to you that we look for this.

Our mutual publisher, Urbain Canel, has to go to Dijon, and promises to give you this letter. Pray write me a few lines to tell me how you are, and how are your wife and your charming daughter,—whether you are soon coming to Paris, and if you will bring us some fine meditation on the mountains. But do not trouble yourself about this last point. However valuable your co-operation is to us, we do not want to be importunate or exacting.

I also sent in the parcel I forwarded to Florence the ode I addressed to you in reply to your charming letter, and which is the first in the new collection I am about to publish. It is a sort of dedication of the whole collection.

Pray come and fetch it in Paris. It will appear in a month.

Farewell, my illustrious friend; write to me soon, and remember that my admiration for your talent is equalled by my tender affection for yourself.

VICTOR.

My wife begs to be kindly remembered to Mme. de Lamartine. Kindest regards from myself.

To M. HENRI DE LATOUCHE.

3rd August 1826.

I have just received a letter from you, my dear Monsieur Latouche, which much surprises me. I answer it only because you used to be *my dear Latouche*, and because I hope this reply may produce an apology from you which I cannot help wishing for.

I know no one on the staff of the *Drapeau blanc*. The only Z. I know is the person who abuses me rather pleasantly in the *Journal des Débats*.

This is the explanation which I am prepared to concede to our old friendship. I regret, for your sake, that you should have deemed it necessary.

VICTOR-M. HUGO.

THE LETTERS OF VICTOR HUGO

To MONSIEUR V. P., *one of the Editors of the "Feuilleton des Affiches" at Angers, at the office of that publication, care of M. Pavie, Royal Printer, at Angers.*

13th December 1826.

It is doubtless to you, dear sir, that I am indebted for the number of the *Feuilleton d'Angers* of the 2nd December, in which the collection of odes and ballads that I have just published is reviewed. At anyrate, it is to you, dear sir, that I owe this favourable article, and it is my duty, as well as a pleasure, to thank you for it.

I do not thank you because you have praised me. I should care very little, allow me to tell you, for mere praise. What I am grateful for in your article is the ability with which it is written; what pleases, charms, and delights me is the complete revelation in these few lines of a noble heart, a vigorous intelligence, and an elevated mind.

I feel, dear sir, that you belong to the circle of friends whom my poor books make for me in the world, and who are unknown to me, but whom I am so glad to meet when any chance opportunity offers of shaking them by the hand. Until I have this good fortune with you, accept this letter as a token of my esteem and regard.

I regret that I can only address you by your initials, V. P.; they are at the foot of an article which our foremost literary men would be able to sign; but, whatever it may be, the name which they conceal will not long remain unknown.—Your friend,

VICTOR HUGO.

TO VARIOUS PERSONS

1827.

To MONSIEUR VICTOR PAVIE.

PARIS, *3rd January* 1827.

Your letter, dear sir, has quite fulfilled all the promise of your article; in it I found the heart of a friend and the soul of a poet—the two things I love best in the world.

You are right—it is a great pleasure to be understood, and to be understood by men of a superior mind. Of all the tokens of commendation which can encourage and reassure a poet whose daring flights of fancy bear him to a new world, the free and unfettered approval of a few lofty minds is the most valuable.

Young as you are, you belong to a distinct category, the only privileged one that nature creates; you have the *mens divinior* which raises a man above his fellows. And although I have seen but very little from your pen, I have no difficulty in foretelling your future.

You are really too kind to take an interest in my small works; pray give me an opportunity of interesting myself in one of yours. Do go on working. What are you doing? In what direction are you employing the intellectual power bestowed on you by Providence? I presume that you are not letting it lie fallow. Tell me all about this, and forgive me for writing to you thus. There should be freedom and confidence between us; we are both about the same age, and of the same character.

And, by the way, why should you not write the book, for instance, of which you give me such a striking sketch? I who, for good or ill, am attracted towards application rather than theory, shall probably never have the time to write it, and besides, you would do it far better than I should.

In conclusion, dear sir, follow your own bent freely. Obey your inspiration. You have all that is required for success—the intelligence which creates and the imagination which fertilises the creation.

The tree is in you: let it grow.

VICTOR HUGO.

Just as I am closing this letter I receive the Angers *Feuilleton*, in which I read the letter I sent to the Academy of Provence. Pray accept my best thanks, and transmit them to your father. It would be very kind of you to send me the Angers *Feuilleton* whenever you write anything in it.

My address is not 30, but 90 [Rue de Vaugirard].

To MONSIEUR LOUIS PAVIE.[1]

PARIS, 15*th January* 1827.

It is I, dear sir, who owe *you* a thousand thanks.

You are kind enough to make me a subscriber to a provincial *feuilleton* which is superior to many Paris

[1] Father of M. Victor Pavie.

feuilletons. You do more—you send me your own works, so matured, so full of wisdom and *esprit*, and your son's verses, which sparkle with youth and poetic feeling. These latter are your productions too, dear sir, and I believe I shall not offend your natural pride as an author and a father by asserting that, remarkable as are your writings, your son is still the greatest of your works. This, by the way, is what was said of Homer *à propos* of Virgil.

Tell your young eaglet, dear sir, your Victor, that there is another Victor who would envy him—if envy could coexist with affection—his fine poem on David, *le Juif*, *la Mer*, and *le Lac*, an ingenious and inspired composition, and, above all, his charming elegy of *l'Enfant*. Tell him especially not to hide *his head under his wing*; his wings are made to soar aloft, and his eyes to gaze at the sun.

If my *five-and-twenty* years (for I am near that) gave me some right of advising his *eighteen*, I should only have to give him hints of a material kind. I should advise him to be more strict about the richness of the rhyme, the only charm of our poetry, and, above all, to strive to confine his thoughts as much as possible within the limits of the regular strophe. He can change the rhythm as often as he likes in the same ode, but there should always be an internal regularity in the arrangement of the metre. This is the way, in my view, to express an idea more forcibly, to give a more ample harmony to the style and more value to the whole of the composition. I do not, however, lay down this as a rule or law, but merely give it for what it is worth,

as the result of reflections on the genius of our lyric poetry. In his case, thought only needs to develop freely. I give some advice to the artist, but I submit it for the approval of the poet.

Farewell, dear sir; accept once more the expression of the gratitude and high esteem with which I have the honour to remain,—your very obedient, humble servant,

VICTOR HUGO.

To VICTOR PAVIE.

PARIS, *7th February* 1827.

Pray do not think, dear sir, that your kind letters can ever be irksome to me. Quite the contrary, they refresh me. I love these outpourings of a youthful heart, these confidences of a lofty and simple mind. The seven years' difference in our ages make me seem almost old to you; and if your friendship occasionally wishes to show some deference to mine, I will accept it as a tribute to my age, and not to my ability.

I have not told you sufficiently, I have not said as much as I should have liked, how greatly your verses have impressed me. They possess the characteristic of the best specimens of our renovated poetry, the union of grace and vigour, of youth and maturity, which is the stamp of all our great poets. You are one of those young men of the nineteenth century whose gravity and

candour astonish the artificial and frivolous old men of the eighteenth. You ask me for *guidance*? This is asking what is beyond my powers. Give the rein to your fancy; let your own nature finish your education; it has already begun so well.

There is nothing, dear sir, you cannot aspire to. Your early poems are of wonderful promise. Even the transition stage you are passing through, and which you describe so well, denotes the crisis of a youthful imagination in process of vigorous development.

You have been kind enough to mention my name in an article in the last number of the *Feuilleton* which bears the stamp of your original mind. I thank you; you wish that my affection for you should be complete: it has begun with gratitude.

Farewell, dear sir. I have only one piece of advice to give you: write fine poetry and good prose, and one request to make you—love me.

V. H.

Pray remember me to your father, and do not frank your letters to me; none of my friends do it.

PARIS, *17th March* 1827.

Your *Dernière Feuille* is charming. You have added to it some lines and a name which, like it, will die; but I was much touched with this last mark of affection bestowed on me by your fine talent.

And you have written me a charming letter, which would have made up to me for the *Globe* and the *Étoile*, if I had needed it. They are people who attack me, and who doubtless have their reasons for so doing. I suppose they like it, so why should I be unhappy about it? On the contrary, I rejoice, as it brings me letters like yours.

I have told my publisher to send you that *Ode à la Colonne*, the whole of which is not equal to the single line—

C'était une feuille d'automne.

Farewell! You promise to write to me often. Pray do not fail to do so. Your friendship, your poetry, make me feel young again. Your letters are already more than a pleasure to me.

VICTOR HUGO.

20th May 1827.

You were born under a lucky star, dear sir. You have a talent which is a credit to your family, and a family which appreciates your talent. I have seen your worthy father, and I cannot tell you how I liked him from the first. There is something so kind, so cordial, so friendly about him, that I could not desire a better protector for the early expansion of a valuable gift like yours. You should both be grateful to God: He could not have given a better son to a better father.

Your father left us soon—too soon; be sure you tell him so; but he was good enough to temper our regret at parting from him with the hope of seeing you shortly. Your kind letter changes this hope into a certainty, and the best proof you could give me of your friendship is to realise it quickly. You would write well everywhere, but there is more food for the mind in Paris: the museums, the picture-galleries, the libraries open out new worlds of thought; in a word, all that can be acquired is here, and you already have all that nature can give.

I was also delighted to make the acquaintance of M. David (of Angers). He has a great deal of talent, and plenty of ideas. He showed me his studio, which is full of fine things.

I need not now tell you to write to me. You know that I love you. Tell your good father that the best way to double the pleasure which your visit in Paris will give me is to come with you.—Your friend,

V. H.

To M. LOUIS PAVIE.

26th May 1827.

After the fine lines which your Victor has just sent me, I should be ashamed to convey my admiration and thanks to him direct in paltry prose; it would be giving him lead in exchange for his bronze and gold. Allow me therefore to pour my feelings of brotherly love and

friendship into your paternal heart. Tell your Victor he must allow me to thank him through you. You will transmit to him this inadequate expression of my deep emotion, and it will be all the more welcome in coming from you.

Yes, dear sir, they are indeed fine lines, full of fire, of brightness, and of grandeur. We ought both to be proud of them—you as the father and I as the *brother* of the poet. I am very flattered at this youthful impassioned ode being dedicated to me, but I should have been still more gratified if my name had been at the foot of it instead of at the head.

Perhaps, dear sir, I ought not to have bestowed such praise on these verses in which I am praised too much. But the dedication of this ode to me is due to an infirmity of friendship. It is not addressed to Victor Hugo, but to a poet of genius, capable of inspiring such a lofty strain, whereas I am only capable of admiring it.

Farewell, dear sir; farewell, fortunate father! Embrace your son for me, till the time comes when I can do so for you.—Very sincerely yours,

VICTOR HUGO.

To VICTOR PAVIE.

PARIS, *24th September* 1827.

It is true, dear sir, that my mother-in-law's more and more hopeless state of health causes us the greatest

anxiety, but this could not prevent me from appreciating the two kind letters which I have received from Angers since you left.

Whatever position I may be in, I can never hear from your kind father or you without emotion and gratitude. So far from the reverse being the case, grief inclines one to friendship.

You have published two capital articles in the Angers *Feuilleton.* You look on art with the eye of a poet; you criticise as an artist. Your talent has something alike precocious and mature about it.

Delacroix is particularly pleased with, and proud of, the fine bit which refers to him. He has begged me to thank you. Go on with these articles; make our Paris papers blush for their inferiority to a provincial paper.

Paul is very much touched by your friendly and brotherly messages to him; he will write to you one of these days. His drama will be acted six weeks hence. Poor Paul will feel the want of you to congratulate or console him.

You will receive *Cromwell* in a fortnight. I have only got to write the preface and a few notes. I shall make them as short as possible; the shorter the better.

Farewell! but come back to us soon. Tell your good father that we must have you when the *Salon* is open. I also want to have a talk with you about the Gothic architecture at Angers. I am delighted to see that you are bitten with architecture. It is such a grand subject!

Farewell once more! *Vale et me ama.*—Your elder brother, VICTOR.

1828

To VICTOR PAVIE.

5th January 1828.

Although you praise me in it, and praise me too much, my dear young friend, I shall nevertheless publish on the housetops that your article is an admirable one, and that it is a pity (I do not say for myself, but for literature in general) that so profound and lofty a piece of criticism should be published in a remote corner of the provinces, while Messrs. R. and Co. display their incompetence in four columns of a paper which prints fifteen thousand copies and has five hundred thousand readers in both continents. But what can we do?

Everyone who has read your article on *Cromwell* is delighted with it: David, Sainte-Beuve, Paul [Foucher] rave about it. I am going to make Émile Deschamps and Charles Nodier read it. Sainte-Beuve has also written two very remarkable articles on this paltry book; the *Globe* refused them, for which the *prosaïstes* bear me a grudge. You see that intolerance is to be found even among philosophers and a *censorship* even among democrats. But again, what can we do?

I send you many good wishes for your happiness, for there is nothing to wish you on the score of ability. Continue to be the pride of your good father, and as for me, I have a New Year's wish, namely, that you may

come and pay me a visit. Pray consult M. Pavie about this. *Ora pro nobis.*

V. HUGO.

23rd January 1828.

Our letters have crossed, my poet. Just as I was reading your *pretty message* you were reading my illegible scrawl. But never mind! your friendship understands me, does it not, even when your eyes cannot make out my writing; and when I write, if my pen is bad, my heart is not so.

Do you know, I am annoyed with myself for having written you a whole page without having told you that your second article is, if possible, finer than the first. What a maturity you have reached at the age of twenty!

What life and spirit! what splendour of style and ideas! Sainte-Beuve was in ecstasies yesterday over your article; he knows it by heart, *word for word*, and repeats it to everybody.

No article has been written in France on *Cromwell* so remarkable as yours; only the great articles in the English Reviews are fit to be compared with yours.

Forgive this scribble. You know that our friend David is quite well now, that he goes out, that he walks in the sun, and will soon begin work again. I go to him every day, to see him and to talk about Victor of Angers with him. My wife and I send our kindest

remembrances to your good father. My eldest brother is just married; when you marry, I shall have another sister-in-law.

VICTOR.

PARIS, *29th February* [1828].

I have not yet thanked you, my young poet, for your kind letter, nor for that from your good father. I know that you are both as full of indulgence for me as for my works, and my deep inconsolable grief is an ample excuse with friends like you. I have lost the man who loved me best in the world—a good and noble man, who was rather proud of me and very fond of me, a father whose interest in me never flagged. This is a support taken away from me very early. Oh, my dear Victor, pray to God to spare your father to you for many a year to come!

You have heard of the mischance which befell Paul [Foucher]—a very trifling misfortune compared with a very great one. I had to stand by him as well as I could on this occasion. Besides, it was I who had brought him bad luck. The herd of intriguers who hissed *Amy Robsart* thought they were indirectly hissing *Cromwell.* It was a wretched little cabal of the classicists, which is hardly worth mentioning.

Farewell, my poet. How is it that you still ask to be admitted to my friendship? Are you not already one of my old friends? The loss of my father has left

an immense blank in my life, but you are one of those who would fill it if it could be filled.—Your *brother*,

VICTOR.

PARIS, *17th July* 1828.

You have every reason to be vexed with me, my poet, for, during all the time that has elapsed since you left us, what reply have I given to your charming letter, and the other printed communications which brought me, one after the other, your fine article on the *Ronde du Sabbat*, the remarkable strophes on *Smarra*, and finally, the excellent paper on the *Faust* of two great poets, Goethe and Delacroix?

But do not think me as guilty as I appear, my dear friend. I have proofs to correct, visits to receive, heavy reading to get through, business to attend to; this month I have written three letters to solicitors and notaries. Imagine the fatigue of all this! And then there is the real reason, which is, that I am lazy.

You are indulgent, I know, and will take me as I am; and bear in mind that although I receive letters from Lamartine, the Abbé de Lamennais, and Chateaubriand, yours are among those which I answer soonest.

Are you still taking an interest in the little Gothic house at Angers, as you promised us? Please let me have some details about this in your next letter, if indeed you still wish to have anything to say to me, who am still interested in you.

Sainte-Beuve has just published his book, which is first-rate. Boulanger is going to send you his *Saint-Barthélemy*, which is magnificent. You see, Paris does not forget Angers.

Farewell! farewell. Paul complains of the rarity of your letters. He is right; they are rarities in more senses than one. Farewell. A thousand kind messages from all of us to all of you.

VICTOR.

To DAVID D'ANGERS.

PARIS, *Saturday morning*. . . [1828].

Just imagine, dear friend, what bad luck! My wife, who has kept well all through the year, takes it into her head to be indisposed to-day, and in the one and only way, perhaps, that can alter her *profile*. She has a wretched toothache, and besides this, her lips are sore and swollen. So that to-day you would find only a suffering and disfigured model. I was not much inclined to let you know of this mishap, as I was so anxious to see you to-day, and foresaw that this letter might perhaps deprive us of this pleasure; but my wife reminds me how valuable your time is, and so my selfishness gives way. But do come if you can, and do not forget that no one admires you more than I do, because no one loves you better.

VICTOR HUGO.

P.S.—My wife hopes that her ailment will have disappeared by Monday.

17th October 1828.

I have a letter from M. de Belleyme, my dear friend, giving us admission to Bicêtre on the 22nd, the day on which the irons are fastened on. If you can spare a moment, come and see me soon, to settle what we are to do.—Your friend, VICTOR HUGO.

I open my letter to thank you a thousand times, as many times as it is admirable.[1]

1st November 1828.

I am very vexed, my dear friend; some important business compelled Lamartine to leave unexpectedly yesterday. It is true that he will return in January and spend three months in Paris, and that he hopes you will still be of the same mind with regard to him; but it is hard for me to have to wait two months for one of your masterpieces. I won't say good-bye. I still hope to be your satellite this evening, if I am not too hoarse. Now I think of it, at what time shall I expect you?—Yours with all my heart, VICTOR HUGO.

[1] The medallion of the poet.

To BARON TAYLOR.

Saturday the 13th.

MY DEAR TAYLOR,—A tragedy has just been written in my family, and I do not think you need be told that I am not the author of it.

I never flew at such high game!

My young brother-in-law Paul (who, by the way, is passionately attached to you) is the culprit.

Now, I will not bestow praise on this tragedy here, because it would be altogether suspicious coming from me; but I do not think I am going too far when I say that it is quite as good as many of those which have from time immemorial been received, put on the stage, acted, and *applauded* at the Français.

Would you therefore be so kind as to tell us what would be the best course to pursue to bring *our* tragedy before the Committee of the Français? The young poet would like, if possible, to be relieved from the formality of a previous examination; but we must first be sure that this exemption would not in any way break through the established rule.

If your many and important engagements would allow you by any chance to look over the piece before it is sent in, I need not tell you that Paul would receive any suggestion from you with pleasure and gratitude.

The subject of the work is *Cosmo de Medici.*

I must add, to give everyone his due, that there is not a single idea, line, or word of mine in the piece. Farewell, my dear noble friend; forgive my importunity.

I should have troubled you with a visit if the road from my arctic pole in the Rue Vaugirard to your antarctic pole in the Rue Bondi had been more practicable.—Always most sincerely yours,

VICTOR HUGO.

1829

3rd April 1829.

You are coming back to us, then, my dear young poet! This is delightful news in the midst of my family troubles. I like your letters, but I should like to have you better still.

I have seen the poor portrait which you mention; it seems to me that I am flattered and yet not done justice to: it is the popular idea of me—a good-looking dog. Still, you have had your money's worth. I am always trying to get yours out of David, and I scold him for not having *published* it yet for your friends. Do you know that the last *Feuilleton* contains a ballad which is a masterpiece? Congratulate M. V. P. on it from me. It is picturesque, novel, and in excellent style. It is like one of those wonderful old paintings by Albert Dürer or Rembrandt.

Talking of great painters, do not believe, with a few stupid newspapers, in the front rank of which I unhesitatingly place the *Globe*, that Delacroix is not up to

the mark. His *Sardanapalus* is a splendid thing, and so grand that it cannot be grasped by small minds. This fine work, however, like many other grand and powerful works, has not been to the taste of the *bourgeois* of Paris; you know the proverb: "*Sifflets des sots sont fanfares de gloire.*" I only regret one thing, and that is, that he did not represent the funeral-pile as on fire: this fine scene would have been still finer had the foreground been a mass of flames. As for M. Gérard's *Sainte Thérèse*, it is better than his *Canning*, no doubt, but remember that M. de Ch[ateaubriand] is not much of a judge of painting: his praise is simply his mode of expressing his thanks.

You ask me to tell you about myself. Alas! just at present I should have to tell you of nothing but lawyers valuers, official seals, inventories, etc. How sad it is that our sorrows so quickly make way for business! I am correcting the proofs of a fourth edition of the *Odes et Ballades*. Farewell, but come quickly with your good father.—*Vale et me ama*,

V. H.

To HIS EXCELLENCY THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR,
at his residence, Rue de Grenelle.

2nd August 1829.

MY LORD,—M. Brifaut has communicated to me, as you had commissioned him to do, what your Excellency told him yesterday morning about my play.[1] There is

[1] *Marion de Lorme* which the censorship wished to suppress.

something so unexpected about the view which he found you held with regard to me, that I must ask your Excellency's permission not to consider it as definitive. I venture to believe that other counsels will prevail in your mind, which is so enlightened and generally so well disposed towards literature, and that you will not come to a decision so contrary to my interests, and, allow me to add, my Lord, to your own.—I remain, my Lord, with great respect, your Excellency's most obedient, humble servant,

VICTOR HUGO.

To MONSIEUR DE LA BOURDONNAYE, *Minister of the Interior.*

PARIS, 14*th August* 1829.

MY LORD,—I am much touched by the King's kindness.

My devotion to the King is in truth deep and sincere. My family, ennobled in the year 1531, has long served the State. My father and my two uncles served it for forty years with their swords. I myself have perhaps been fortunate enough to render some humble service to the King and to the cause of royalty. I have sold five editions of a book in which the name of Bourbon occurs on every page.

My Lord, this devotion is purely disinterested. Six years ago the late King deigned to grant me, by royal

decree, and simultaneously with my noble friend M. de la Lamartine, a pension of two thousand francs on the literary fund of the Minister of the Interior. I received this pension all the more gratefully because I had never asked for it.

My Lord, this pension, modest as it is, is enough for me. It is true that nearly all my father's fortune has been sequestrated by the King of Spain, in contravention of the Treaty of 1814. It is true that I have a wife and three children. It is true that I am supporting widows and relations who bear my name. But I have been fortunate enough to make an honourable and independent living by my pen. This is why the pension of two thousand francs, which I value chiefly as a token of royal favour, is enough for me.

It is, however, also true that, as I live by my pen, I had been obliged to reckon on the legitimate profits of my drama, *Marion de Lorme*. But as the performance of this play—a conscientious honest work of art—appears to be dangerous, I bow to the decision, hoping that the Sovereign's august will may change in this respect. I had asked to have my play acted; I do not ask for anything else.

Be so good, therefore, my Lord, as to tell the King that I entreat him to allow me to remain in the position in which I was when his fresh favours reached me. Whatever happens—I need not repeat the assurance to you—nothing hostile can ever come from me. The King need expect nothing but proofs of fidelity, loyalty, and devotion from Victor Hugo.

I should be glad, my Lord, if your Excellency will be

kind enough to submit this letter to the King, with the expression of my warm gratitude and deep respect.—I have the honour to be, my Lord, your Excellency's most obedient, humble servant,

VICTOR HUGO.

To BARON TAYLOR.

23rd August 1829.

I have seen M. de la Bourdonnaye this morning. The play will decidedly be stopped, interdicted, prohibited. Come and see me, my friend, and I will tell you all about it.

VICTOR.

Thursday.

To CHARLES NODIER.

2nd November 1829.

And you too, Charles!

I would give a good deal not to have read yesterday's *Quotidienne*. One of the most painful shocks in life is the uprooting of an old and warm friendship.

I had long ago ceased to look out for your approval of my writings. I did not complain of this. Why should you have gone on compromising yourself by an open friendship with a man who brings his friends nothing but hatred, calumny, and persecution? I saw that you were withdrawing from the fray, and, as I loved you for yourself, I thought you were right.

By degrees I saw your silence and indifference with regard to me transformed into praise, enthusiasm, and acclamation for my enemies, even for the most violent, the most bitter, the most odious of them. This, again, was perfectly natural, for, after all, it is only a personal matter, and of course my enemies may possess wit, ability, and genius. I repeat, this was quite natural, and I do not complain of it for a single moment. I did not love you any the less for it, and (you would be wrong not to believe me, Charles) this was my real feeling.

I had not foreseen (hence my perfect tranquillity of mind) that the natural, perhaps inevitable, transition for you would be a campaign against me. So you have joined in it too. Yesterday's attack is underhand, obscure, ambiguous, I allow, but it none the less stung me deeply—it none the less roused, like an electric shock, more than twenty of my friends who came to condole with me over it.

And what moment have you selected for it?—the very moment when my enemies are rallying on all sides in greater numbers and with greater bitterness than ever, when they are unremittingly weaving a network of hatred and calumny around me, when I stand alone between two equally deadly foes—the Government which detests and

persecutes me, and the determined cabal which controls nearly every newspaper. Ah, Charles! at a moment like this I at least had a right to reckon on your silence.

Or is the reason that I have offended you in any way? if so, why did you not tell me of it?

It is not that I object to your criticism, which is accurate, closely-reasoned, and true. It is a very far cry from the *Orientales* to Lord Byron. But surely, Charles, there were plenty of enemies to tell me this just now.

You will doubtless be surprised; you will think I am very touchy. But I cannot help it—a friendship like mine for you is frank, cordial, deep, and cannot be broken without a cry of pain. Besides, this is my nature. I do not mind the dagger-thrusts of my enemies; I feel the pin-pricks of a friend.

After all, I am not vexed with you; tear up this letter, and think no more about it. What you wished to break off is broken off; I shall always feel it, but no matter. If anyone mentions the subject again to me, I shall defend you, as I defended you yesterday. But believe me, it is very sad for me, and for you as well, Charles, for never in your life have you lost a friend more profoundly, more tenderly, and more absolutely devoted to you.

VICTOR HUGO.

To BARON TAYLOR.

3rd November 1829.

In reply to my application M. de la Bourdonnaye writes to me, my dear Taylor, that *Hernani* was returned to the theatre *on the 31st of October*. Is this really true? And how is it I know nothing about it? It would be very kind of you to send me a line saying *yes* or *no*, or, better still, to come and see me for a few minutes some morning.—Your friend,

V. H.

To MONSIEUR DE SAINT-VALRY.

PARIS, *18th December* 1829.

How kind it is of you, my friend, to still think a little about me, who seem to have forgotten all of you! You know well that I only appear to have done so. In your heart of hearts you feel that it is impossible for mine to change. And then, you make allowances for me, and it is in this that you are a real friend. You know the crushing burdens I am staggering under. The *Comédie Française*, *Hernani*, rehearsals, greenroom intrigues, the rivalries of actors and actresses, underhand dealings of the newspapers and of the police; and besides all this, my own private affairs still in great confusion, my father's estate not wound up, our Spanish property

grabbed by Ferdinand VII., our St. Domingo indemnity retained by Boyer, our gravel-pits in Sologne for sale for the last two years, the houses at Blois which our step-mother is going to law with us about,—consequently little or nothing to be got out of the remnants of a large fortune except lawsuits and worries. This is what my life consists of. How can one be everything to one's friends when one has not a moment to oneself? At anyrate, if I do not write to them very often I am as fond of them as ever, and you are one of the dearest, oldest, and most valued among them. Well, you are safe in port, remain there! *I* am battling with the waves, and breasting the stream. You let yourself float with it. You are the wise and happy man.

VICTOR.

1830

To HIS EXCELLENCY THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR.

5th January 1830.

I have the honour to lay the following facts before His Excellency the Minister of the Interior.

Last July, when the *Comédie Française* wished to put on the stage the first drama that I had written, *Marion de Lorme*, I applied to M. de Martignac, who was then

Minister, for exemption from the jurisdiction of the censorship, and for permission to submit to the Minister's censorship alone—a favour which he had already granted to several dramatic authors. This is how I explained to him, verbally and in writing, what harm he might do me by handing over my play to the censors.

The dramatic censors are all taken from the literary party opposed to us, which is a compliment to the party that claims full liberty in artistic matters to which I am proud to belong (not that I wish to saddle the whole of the old school with the faults of some of its members, but it is a fact I point out by the way). Now these censors, mostly dramatic authors themselves, all of them interested champions of the old literary as well as of the old political *régime*, are my opponents, and, if need be, my natural enemies. What is a play that has not been acted? One of the most fragile and uncertain things on the face of the earth. A scene, a line, a word divulged and travestied beforehand, is quite enough, as every theatre knows, to kill a dramatic work before it has seen the light. The result is, that the censorship, which is an odious annoyance for every literary school, is, for us advocates of the freedom of art, something still worse—a snare, a trap, an ambuscade. It is therefore of great importance to me that five open enemies should not be let into the secret of my play before it is performed, and should not be able to reveal the details of it beforehand to cabals which are interested in delivering a well-prepared attack on it. For a person in my position, the censorship is the worst kind of cabal.

This is what I said to the Minister then in office.

He saw fit to refuse me the favour which he had granted to others. My application was rejected.

The only concession I secured was that *Marion de Lorme* should be read by one censor only, the choice of whom was left to me, although I was not allowed to select anyone outside the censors' department. I chose a literary man who appeared to me to be the most deserving of confidence, and with whom I had been on friendly terms *before he became a censor.* This *examiner*, as he called himself, reproached me almost tenderly for my distrust of the censorship. He quite understood, so he said, all the disadvantages and risks of having verses divulged, hawked about, mutilated, and parodied before the performance of a drama, but he added that my fears of the censorship carried me too far. The dramatic examiners, he continued, are not men of letters. Entrusted with a purely official duty—that of eliminating political allusions—they have not, and ought not to have, anything to do with the literary merits of work submitted to them. Their function begins and ends with their official duty. A censor who would maliciously divulge the details of the work which he had examined would be—and I quote his own words—as culpable and as deserving of reprobation as the priest who revealed the secrets of the confessional.

This is what the then censor said to me. Such language would doubtless have reassured anyone of less stubborn views than mine on the ways of man and of the police. However, M. de la Bourdonnaye became Minister, and *Marion de Lorme* was prohibited. Faithful to my conscientious and artistic work, I did my best to

repair the injury which the Minister had done me. I wrote *Hernani*. The *Comédie Française* at once took up the drama. It had to be submitted to the Government. I have no favour to ask from the present Ministry, so I sent my drama to the censorship just as it was, without making any demands or taking any precautions, though not without misgiving. I remembered the asseverations of the censor of *Marion de Lorme*, however, and I tried to persuade myself, with some difficulty, that there are men who can carry on a somewhat dishonest trade in an honest way.

This, however, is what has happened since *Hernani* has been submitted to the censors. Some verses of the drama, partly travestied, or wholly turned into ridicule, a few quoted correctly, but ingeniously dovetailed with spurious ones—bits of scenes, in fact, more or less skilfully disfigured and outrageously parodied—have been put into circulation.

Portions of the work dressed up in this way have received the semi-publicity which writers and theatres so justly dread. The authors of these underhand tricks have hardly taken the trouble to hide themselves; they have done it in broad daylight, and have simply selected the newspapers as the medium of their discreet confidences. They have gone further. Not content with prostituting the piece to their papers, they are now engaged in prostituting it to their *salons*.

I hear on all sides (and the matter has attained a public notoriety to which I can bear witness) that spurious copies of *Hernani* have been made, that the whole drama, or part of it, has been read in many

places, and especially in the house of a head clerk in M. de Corbière's department.

Now all this is very serious.

It is needless to point out the effect which such proceedings are intended to produce by their authors, on a drama the fate of which is settled in a couple of hours, and often without appeal.

Now, from what source do those practices proceed? From what copy of *Hernani* can all these parodies, these spurious versions, these fraudulent copies, these surreptitious readings, have been made? I draw the Minister's special attention to this.

There are only two copies of *Hernani* in existence besides the one in my house. One has been lodged at the theatre; that is the one used every day for rehearsals. As soon as the rehearsal is over, the manuscript is put under lock and key. No one can have access to it. The secretary of the *Comédie Française*, to whom the greatest care is enjoined as soon as the piece is received, is under the strictest obligation to keep it secret. The other manuscript is in the censor's office.

Now pirated copies are being circulated. Where can they come from? I ask once more. From the theatre, whose hopes they would blight, whose interests they would ruin, where the greatest caution is observed, where the thing is an impossibility,—or from the censors?

The censorship has one manuscript at its disposal, a manuscript with which it can do what it likes. The censorship is my literary and political enemy. It has the privilege of being dishonest and disloyal. I impeach the censorship.

I beg his Excellency to accept the assurance of the profound respect with which I am his most obedient, humble servant,

VICTOR HUGO.

To M. PAUL LACROIX.

27th February 1830, *midnight.*[1]

Thank you a thousand times, my dear good friend. I see your kind heart in all you do for me. I wish you had been at the theatre to-night. You would have laughed. The classic cabal wanted to bite, and did bite, but, thanks to our friends, it broke its teeth. The third act got some rough treatment, which it will receive for some time to come, but the fourth act silenced opposition, and the fifth went admirably—better even than the first time. Mlle. Mars surpassed herself. She was recalled, cheered, and overwhelmed with applause. She was enchanted.

I think we are all right now. The receipts of the two first nights amounted to nine thousand francs, *which is unprecedented at this theatre.* But we must not rest on our laurels. The enemy is on the alert. The third performance must discourage them, if possible. Therefore, in the name of our cherished literary freedom, summon the whole clan of brave and faithful friends for Monday. I look to you to help me in pulling out this last tooth

[1] On returning from the second performance of *Hernani.*

of the old classic Pegasus. To the rescue, and advance!

I am besieged by publishers. Please send M. Fournier to me. Or what do you think of this? Everybody advises me not to negotiate myself, as I am so weak and easy-going in money matters, but to select a friend to discuss terms with the publishers. Would it be troubling you too much, my dear friend, to ask you to do me this service? Would you have the time for it? Above all, do you think it should be done without me? Give me your best advice on the matter.

Tell your good brother that I count on him for Monday, although *Hernani* must bore him terribly. The great cause is at stake, and not myself personally.—Yours most affectionately,

VICTOR HUGO.

My respectful compliments to Mme. Lacroix.

To BARON TAYLOR.

10*th March, midnight.*

If you have any trace of passes of mine finding their way into improper hands, give me a clue; you will be rendering me a service as well as the theatre.

I count on your box for Monday. Do not forget that this is as important to the theatre as to myself.

11*th March* 1830.

This evening's performance[1] has been warmly defended and applauded, my dear Taylor, owing to the decision I had to take not to diminish the number of my tickets. I must see you about this. The actors are unanimous in thinking that it would be highly imprudent to cut down my free passes. Bear in mind that it is always the same friends who come, and that consequently no harm can be done to the receipts, which always keep above 4000 francs, in spite of all opposition, which is excellent. So do try to come and talk it all over with me. I would go to see you, but I have endless engagements which detain me at home every day up to six o'clock. For the rest, until I see you, you agree to my continuing to take the same steps as I have done for the previous performances, do you not?—Your friend,

V. H.

To ARMAND CARREL.

15*th March* 1830.

I had been at work up to five o'clock this morning, and was fast asleep when M. Armand Carrel called. I am very sorry that I was not woke up, not for M. Carrel's sake, but for my own. I am alike too morose and too shy for anyone to be very desirous of knowing me, or

[1] Of *Hernani*.

to be very anxious to know other people myself. These opportunities, however, of meeting my fellow-men, which I am inclined to avoid from love of solitude and natural melancholy, I have always wished for in M. Carrel's case. I do not see why I should not admit this here, whatever advantage the admission may give him over me. All that I know of him, whether from his works or his friends, his stern and vigorous type of ability and character, his honourable and courageous career, his early conflicts with political tribunals, everything down to the one occasion on which I conversed with him at Rabbe's house, and when, as I was told, I had the misfortune to offend him, animated as we both were at the time by very different political enthusiasm,—all this has long inspired me with one of those warm sympathies in favour of M. Carrel which as a rule, sooner or later, ripen into friendship.

And after all, far apart as we may seem to each other at the present moment, there is perhaps a greater analogy between us than M. Carrel himself is aware of. I was struggling while he was struggling; while he was breasting the political current I was breasting the literary current. We have both been outlaws, so to speak, at the same time. Only, his case was more serious than mine, and consequently of a much finer type. I have been proscribed by the Academy only.

For eight years, however, I have been bearing the burden and the heat of the day, and have pursued my task without being diverted from it by personal defence of myself against the thousand and one attacks which have rained upon me day by day. In an age when everything

is done by *salons* and newspapers, I began and continued my career without a single *salon* or newspaper. My life has been one of solitude, of conscientious devotion to my art. And I would draw M. Carrel's special attention to this: born to a large fortune under the Empire, both Empire and fortune have failed me. At the age of twenty I found myself a married man, a father of a family, with no resource but my labour, and living from hand to mouth like a workman, while Ferdinand VII. had sequestrated and was spending my property. Now from that time—and the fact is perhaps unusual enough for me to be proud of it—having been obliged to live by my pen and to support my family with it, I have kept it free from all speculative transactions, from all mercantile engagements. I have done literary work more or less well, but never literary speculation. A poor man, I have cultivated art like a rich man, for its own sake, thinking more of the future than of the present. Forced by hard times to make a business of writing, I can truly say that business considerations have never impaired the value of my work.

This is what I should have said (at greater length, and because a man of his stamp is worth the trouble) to M. Armand Carrel if I had had the honour of seeing him. He is, moreover, the only man to whom I have, as it were, opened the door of my inner life, and I beg him, whatever may be his opinion of this letter, to treat it as confidential.

As for *Hernani*, we have got far beyond it now—far above it, as it seems to me. I care much more for what M. Carrel says on the subject than for what appears in

the *National.* I know that newspapers can do material service or injury, but my livelihood is assured for the next eighteen months, and consequently I care little for the material aspect of the question. I am not sorry, by the way, that I did not see M. Armand Carrel, as he has still an article to write. I should not have liked him to suspect me of wishing to influence him, and I hope he has not had any idea of this. Later on, if he wishes it, I will go and see him, and, whatever his article may be like, shake him by the hand. Whatever his article may be like, I repeat, for I shall always be very grateful to him for it. If it is severe, its frankness will please me; if favourable, nothing could be of greater value to me, for the good opinion of a superior man arms one with fresh strength and courage against mediocrities.

VICTOR HUGO.

SIR,—I have only seen to-day by chance your article of yesterday about me.

I neither *ordered* nor *commanded* the *Journal des Débats* to insert my answer to M. Z. A letter which I have just written to M. Z., and which that witty writer will doubtless hasten to make public, will sufficiently clear up this point.

As for the answer itself, this is what I have to say to you. I did not confine myself to quoting, as you assert, two discredited odes of J. B. [Rousseau]. The extracts I made from that poet are taken from *nine* of his poems

(seven odes and two cantatas), the majority of which those most admired by the classicists, especially the ode to the Count du Luc; you declare that not one of these extracts is to be found among Rousseau's *Æuvres choisies*: the only volume I have of this poet is his *Æuvres choisies*, and from it I took all my quotations.

I did not, however, expect to be accused of admiration for J. B. Rousseau by the classicists. One must get accustomed to everything, and I confess this is a matter of indifference to me. I only quoted Rousseau to M. Z. because he quoted him himself; in the same way, I quoted Horace and Virgil against him because he had appealed to these admirable poets. It seemed to me piquant to fight him with his own weapons.

You accuse me of having said *I was pressed for time*, because, according to you, *three months had elapsed* between the date of M. Hoffman's article and my reply. You are mistaken. M. Hoffman's article appeared six weeks ago, on the 14th of June. I was absent from Paris then, and did not return till the 19th. On the 21st of June my letter was in the hands of M. Z. You see, it is not my fault that it was not published sooner. It had been in the office of the *Débats* for five weeks. I was therefore not wrong in saying *I was pressed for time*, as this letter of four columns was composed in a few hours.

TO VARIOUS PERSONS

To MESSRS. ABEL DESJARDINS, LACAN, DUBERTHIER, DOUDEAU, MÉCHAIN, *Law Students.*

With the greatest pleasure, gentlemen,—all young hearts are generous. They must decide between me and my enemies. I place myself unreservedly in your hands.

VICTOR HUGO.

2nd GALLERY.
Five places.

Entrance by the small door next to Mme. Chevet's house, between four and five o'clock.

To CHARLES NODIER.

28th July 1830, *morning.*

God has just sent me a great blessing, dear Nodier: my wife was safely delivered last night of a fat, chubby-cheeked, healthy daughter. You must share in this joy, as I wish to share in all yours.

Inform Mme. Nodier of our happiness, and tell Mlle. Marie that she has a little sister.

Farewell, my friend; I hope to see you soon. I am delighted with my little daughter. Here at last is a work of mine which has a prospect of life.

VICTOR.

To CHARLES NODIER.

4th August [1830?].[1]

Thank you a thousand times, my dear friend. We are quite quiet; all is going on well at present, and will, I hope, continue to do so. The population of Paris is behaving admirably, but something must soon be organised.

Give my love to all around you.—Yours ever,

VICTOR H.

To M. ADOLPHE DE SAINT-VALRY.

PARIS, *7th August* 1830.

Thanks, my dear friend, for your kind and friendly letter. That is how we ought always to write to each other, and love each other. Between old friends like us there should be no coquetry, but a good, solid, cordial affection. We received the kindest treatment from your good mother. She offered to take us all in, but it would not have been right for me to accept her hospitality, and so I declined it. We were a whole houseful—three children, two servants, and my wife near her confinement. This was too large a party, and it was only reasonable we should go to the inn. And then, your little town of Montfort-l'Amaury is such a curious place that I am

[1] After the July Revolution.

really not sure (this is between ourselves, and jokingly) whether I should not have somewhat compromised your good mother in my double character of political and literary Liberal. Are you aware that these good folk are still in their royalist honeymoon of 1815, and that when they have called So-and-So a Liberal they have employed their worst term of abuse, and have exhausted their indignation? Imagine what they would have thought of me, interrupting their embraces and their congratulations on the Polignac decrees by saying to them, "Paris has upset the *coups-d'état* maker; Polignac is done for, even the Bourbons have disappeared! and both Minister and dynasty, the one culpable and the other blind, only get their deserts!" it would have been falling among them like a Paris bomb, a tricolor flag, or a red cap. I am not quite sure if I ought not to have been under some apprehension; I was told in a whisper *not to speak*—to be prudent. It was laughable. You understand now that, if I had stayed with your mother, she would have been lost for ever in the good opinion of the little royalist society of Montfort. At all events, I only compromised the inn. Perhaps it will lose its sign of the *fleur de lys.*

We are now back here, my dear friend, satisfied but uneasy; thinking, however, of you, and loving you always, with faith in the future and in you.

VICTOR.

To MONSIEUR ALPHONSE DE LAMARTINE, *at his country-seat of Saint-Point, near Mâcon.*

PARIS, *7th September* 1830.

Between your letter and my reply, my dear friend, has come a Revolution. On the 28th of July, just as I was going to write to you, the cannonade made me drop my pen. Since then, in this vortex which surrounds us and makes us giddy, it has been impossible to devote a thought to poetry or friendship. The fever attacks everyone, and you cannot defend yourself against outside impressions; the contagion is in the air. It infects you in spite of yourself: art, poetry, the stage, disappear at such a moment. The Chambers, the country, the nation, absorb everything. Politics becomes one's life.

However, when once this earthquake has gone by, I am convinced we shall find our poetical edifice standing, and all the stronger for the shocks which it will have withstood. Our cause is also one of liberty; it is a revolution too: it will advance unharmed side by side with its political sister. Revolutions, like wolves, do not prey on each other.

Your letter delighted me. It is good, nice, cordial prose, but now I expect the poetry. Do not forget that you promised to send it me.

Farewell. Where are you? What are you doing? When are you coming back? I had my own domestic anxieties in the middle of the social revolution. My wife's confinement took place while the bullets were

shattering the slates on our roof. She was safely delivered, and I am now the father of four children.

They are all flourishing. One day they will all love and admire you as I do.

VICTOR HUGO.

My compliments to Mme. de Lamartine.

To VICTOR PAVIE.

17th September 1830.

Thank you for your kind letter, my dear Pavie. I am glad to hear you are well, that you found your kind father and brother in good health, and that you still think of me a little amid all the excitement of the holidays. What you say about those lines goes to my heart. I wrote them with the intention that you should feel them in that way. Tell our friend Théodore [Pavie] that he has a share of your vivid and fine imagination. What I read of his in the *Feuilleton* delighted me.

My wife got over her confinement capitally: just after the shooting and cannonading was over she presented me with a little girl with a tiny mouth; Sainte-Beuve is to be godfather; we are going to call her Adèle, and she is to be baptized on Sunday. We shall drink your health.

I am over head and ears in *Notre-Dame*. I fill sheet after sheet, and the subject grows and lengthens

before me to such an extent that I am not sure whether my manuscript will not reach the level of the towers.

As for *Marion de Lorme*, I am waiting till the theatre is reorganised, and I much hope you will then be in Paris. You know that your applause sweetens my success, if there is any success in the case.

My love to you and yours.

VICTOR.

To M. FROIDEFOND DES FORGES, *Commanding the 4th Battalion of the 1st Legion of the National Guard in Paris.*

PARIS, *7th October* 1830.

MY DEAR COMMANDER AND COMRADE,—The letter you have been good enough to write to me surprises me very much.

The principle which regulates promotion in the National Guards is election.

The power of the general-in-command himself is subject to election, and ought, in my opinion, to have been submitted to the legions for their satisfaction.

I was appointed, by the free choice of my fellow-citizens of the 1st Legion, sub-lieutenant assistant secretary to the council of discipline.

You announced my appointment yourself, in presence of all the electors who had just voted.

I am therefore sub-lieutenant assistant secretary to

the council of discipline by the paramount fact of election.

The rank and the office are inseparable. They are derived from the same source; they possess the same value.

Your letter of to-day, however, informs me that I am still secretary to the council, but have ceased to be an officer, and that this is in consequence of a decision of the general-in-command.

There must be some mistake here—either deception of the general-in-command, or a usurpation of authority which cannot have proceeded from the oldest and most illustrious champion of liberty.

No decision, even of the general-in-command, even of the King, can invalidate an election.

An election is sacred, incontestable, paramount. Election being the actual source of all power, cannot depend on anyone.

Whether it be the sergeant's stripes or the colonel's epaulets, every grade in the National Guards is of equal intrinsic value. All start from the same principle. All should be prized alike by the citizens who receive them. They cannot allow the slightest discredit to be inflicted on the commission conferred on them by their fellow-citizens. It is a trust which they hold from election, and which they can only return to election, but intact and uninjured.

These are high-sounding principles about a small affair. But in these days everything forms one consistent whole. The crown of a king, the epaulet of a sub-lieutenant, are derived from the same authority—that of election. Both proceed from the sovereignty of the people.

To-day the principle has been violated in my person. The choice of my fellow-citizens has conferred on me a rank and an office. No power on earth can divide the commission and keep the rank while dropping the office.

A law must be passed to meet the case. We will all discuss the basis of it. In the meanwhile let us keep to the strict principle.

I maintain that I am inviolably clothed with the rank which you yourself announced that I was invested with, and which the decision you have done me the honour to communicate to me claims to take away. This decision is null and void, in fact and in law.

I protest against it, and I beg you to be so good as to have it promptly revoked by the general-in-command. Publicity given to a fact of this kind might lead to untoward results.

I am convinced that our illustrious general will be grateful to me for this protest. It proves my boundless confidence in his loyalty to principle. In calling his attention to-day to a decision which has been snatched from him, in resisting it, if need be, with all my strength, I am acting as he would act in my place. I am proving myself, so far as in my power lies, his pupil. To uphold the rights of all is the duty of each of us.

I beg you will be so good as to submit this letter to the general-in-command.

I have the honour to be, my dear commander and comrade, with sincere regard, your obedient servant,

VICTOR HUGO,
Sub-lieutenant Assistant Secretary
to the Council of Discipline.

TO VARIOUS PERSONS

To MADAME BENJAMIN CONSTANT.

8th November 1830.

DEAR MADAME,—Your private misfortune is a public calamity. Your loss is ours as well. Permit me to tell you that at the funeral of this illustrious man to-morrow there will be one deeply afflicted heart among the people which will mourn for him. This heart will be mine, madame. I have seen but too little of M. Benjamin Constant. Still, I think I may say that I loved him. His was one of those great minds which fill so large a space in a century, that all, even those most lost in the crowd, cannot help often admiring its grandeur and continually studying its proportions.

Pardon me, madame, for intruding on your grief. Amid the chorus of great voices which will be raised to glorify him and console you, one voice more, an obscure voice, a voice from the crowd, is of small account for you and for him. But I wanted something of my sorrow to reach yours. And then, I am not one of those who presume to console you, madame. This calamity concerns us all so much that I should need consolation myself.

There is one thing, however, which, though it cannot console you, may help to assuage your grief by enlarging it if possible, and that is the thought that in France, in Europe, in the whole world, every enlightened mind will mourn for Benjamin Constant with you. He leaves two widows behind him, you and France.

I have the honour to be, madame, with deep respect, your very humble servant,

VICTOR HUGO.

1831

To MLLE. MARS, *Rue Saint-Lazare.*

6th January 1831.

I have received a letter from Paul, madame, in which he communicates to me the conversation he had the honour of having with you yesterday on the subject of *Marion de Lorme.* I hasten to send you the explanation which he thought you desired. I have but one wish, madame, and that is, to see you in the part of *Marion de Lorme.* You gave such an admirable interpretation of the part of Doña Sol that I cannot help often thinking how much you would make of Marion. Besides, you were so good to me that it is a pleasure to me to think that I can show you some gratitude by placing at your disposal the part which you have the kindness to wish for. I will keep it for you, then, and I may tell you that I have refused all proposals from other quarters.

I still hope, therefore, to see you in the part of Marion. But as you know, madame, the obstacles which stopped me still exist, at least those relating to the

present composition of the administration of the theatre and to its position, I am led to hope that they will soon disappear, that is to say, that the company will be dissolved and the theatre offered to the public. In that case, madame, I shall hasten to apply to you, if you are still willing to assist me.

I hope to go and see you very soon. The first visit I pay will be to you. Just now I am finishing some very urgent work. Permit me in the meantime to kiss your hand and to offer you my tribute of respect and admiration.

VICTOR HUGO.

To M. VICTOR PAVIE, 60 *or* 64 *Rue Saint-André-des-Arcs.*

25*th February* 1831.

You are right, my dear friend—perfectly right. I never thought of *managing* a theatre, but only of *having one of my own.* I do not want to be the manager of a company of actors, but the proprietor of an establishment, the master of a studio in which art could be turned out on a grand scale, with everybody, manager and actors, under me, and at a distance from me. I want to be able to mould and remould the clay to my own liking, to melt and remelt the wax, and, to do this, the clay and the wax must both belong to me. Besides, there will be somebody to administer and *manage* on my behalf. I

shall only write the plays, and, once the machine is started, shall perhaps go off and write them on the Lake of Como, or on the banks of the Rhine, or in your house. In this way I should be even less mixed up with theatrical matters than if I remained an *outside* author. What contaminates a poet is all the worries of the greenroom. You can understand that there can be none of these worries for the master. Besides, shall I ever have a theatre, and is not all this a mere dream?

But set your mind at rest; come and see me; I will finish this letter with a talk. I cannot tell you how greatly yours has touched me. I would not wound so noble and tender a friendship for anything in the world, even if my friend were wrong; but in this instance he is right. I am, and always was, of the same opinion as you. My real nature does not alter; you know I am a *synthetic* man, and in consequence full of prejudices.

Treat this letter as quite confidential for a thousand reasons, and come and see me. I have a favour to ask of you.

Ex imo corde. V. H.

To MADEMOISELLE MARS, 64 *Rue Saint-Lazare.*

Tuesday, 10*th March* 1831.

MADAM,—Every day I wish to go and see you, and every day my time is taken up by a crowd of engagements. But I really want to talk to you, to give you

a number of explanations to which you will listen with your usual charming kindness, to convey to you many regrets which you will have no difficulty in believing. You have been good enough to call on me twice. I was very sorry not to have been at home. You would have seen that I am in no way to blame for the decision I was obliged to take, to withdraw *Marion de Lorme* once and for all from the *Théâtre Français.* You know that the Ministry has had the hardihood to re-establish the censorship; the authors were obliged to bind themselves not to give any play to the censured theatres; the *Théâtre Français* was in this category. I adhered, as in duty bound, to the authors' agreement. The *Porte-Saint-Martin* offered to act my play, and to fight the censorship as much as I liked. I informed Taylor of this, in accordance with my promise, by communicating to him the conditions to which M. Crosnier was willing to subscribe; I told him that I would give the preference to the *Théâtre Français* on the same terms. I asked him to let you and the committee know of it, and I promised him that I would wait for four-and-twenty hours before signing anything. I heard nothing more from him, although I waited three days instead of four-and-twenty hours, and finally, no answer being forthcoming, I signed. Another consideration of a most imperious nature influenced my decision. I received information that my subject had been purloined from me, and that two *Marion de Lorme,* in prose, had already been offered to two theatres. (I am assured at this very moment that one of these pieces has lately been read at the *Théâtre Français.*) There was therefore not a moment

to lose. The *Théâtre Français* being under prohibition, owing to the censorship business, your action against the members, the well-nigh certainty (admitted by Taylor himself, and confirmed since by the steps taken by the *Théâtre Français* to secure Mme. Dorval) that you would not act any more, the necessity in any event of waiting for an indefinite time, during which my subject would have been stolen from me and the bloom taken off my piece by other theatres,—all this made me decide for the *Porte-Saint-Martin*. I hear to-day that you would have been able to act for me. I am truly sorry. I am also told that you are kind enough to somewhat regret the loss of the part which I thought you filled so admirably. That is almost a consolation. It is equivalent to a hope that you will not refuse the next part which I shall be delighted to offer you. In the meanwhile, madam, forgive me if you think there is anything to forgive me for. Write me a line to say that you will not be too angry with me, and that you will permit me to work once more for you. Above all, pity me, and keep some friendship for me in return for my unbounded admiration and profound devotion.

VICTOR HUGO.

To MADAME MENESSIER NODIER, *at Metz.*

Sunday, 5th September 1831.

You are really too kind, madame; and so is Charles. An article from Charles on *Marion* would be more than

a distinction for me—it would be a piece of good fortune. My poor play has been strangely flattered and daubed by the critics. It wants a hand like that of my friend and your father to clean it up a little.

It would also be very kind of him to let the *Temps* know that he is writing his article on *Marion* in book form, if such a thing exists. I am ashamed of giving him this trouble in addition to that which he is already taking for me; but his influence with the *Temps*, as in every other quarter, should have more credit and authority than any other, and especially than mine.

There are so many glaring printer's errors in the first edition of *Marion* that I do not like to lend it you in this state. The publisher, it appears, is preparing a second edition; I hope to offer you a copy, if there are not so many typographical enormities, and especially if the paper is not so hideous. Up to the present *Marion* has been clothed in common shop paper. The book looks as if it had come from the grocer's. It is true that it is bound to return there.

Do not go away yet, madame, I beg of you. Let me at least have the happiness of spending an hour or two with you.

My respectful compliments to Mme. Nodier, and my love to Charles.—Your respectful and devoted friend,

VICTOR.

My wife sends you her best love.

I hate Metz!

To KING JOSEPH.

PARIS, *6th September* 1831.

SIRE, — Your letter has touched me deeply. I cannot adequately express my thanks to your Majesty.

I have not forgotten, Sire, that my father was your friend. This was the word he used himself. I was filled with gratitude and joy in seeing it come from your Majesty's pen.

I have seen M. Poinnet. He gave me the impression of being a man of real distinction. You, however, Sire, are, and always have been, a good judge. I talked with him openly. He will tell you of my hopes, of my wishes, of all my thoughts. I believe that the future contains events of an unfailing, calculable, necessary kind, which destiny would bring to pass of itself; but it is sometimes good that the hand of man should aid the force of things a little. Providence is generally slow-footed. One can hasten its steps.

It is because I am devoted to France, to liberty, that I believe in the future of your royal nephew.[1] He can be of great service to his country. If he were to give, as I do not doubt he would, the guarantees required by the ideas of emancipation, of progress, and of liberty, no one would rally to this new order of things more cordially and more zealously than I, and with me, Sire—I can answer for it—all the rising generation in France, which venerates the name of the Emperor, and on which, obscure as I am, I perhaps have some influence.

[1] The Duke of Reichstadt.

It is on the rising generation that we must rely, Sire. The old adherents of the Empire have been ungrateful, or are worn out. The rising generation is everything now in France. It bears in its bosom the future of the country—and it knows it.

I shall receive with gratitude the valuable documents which your Majesty intends sending me by M. Presles. I think your Majesty can do an immense deal for the son of the Emperor.

I know that your Majesty has always been a lover of letters, and has cultivated them with such success as to shed lustre even on a throne. Your approval, therefore, so enlightened and so kindly, is in every way a distinction for me. Permit me then, Sire, to offer your Majesty, as a personal compliment, a copy of my last work. As M. Poinnet is leaving to-morrow, I have no time to present it in a form more worthy of your Majesty. I hope you will read it with indulgence. You will see in it, as in all my other works, the name of the Emperor. I always allude to him, because he is always in my mind. If your Majesty has honoured me by reading what I have hitherto written, you will have noticed that in each of my works my admiration for your illustrious brother has grown deeper and deeper, more and more heartfelt, more and more free from the royalist alloy of my early days.

Count on me, Sire; the little I can I will do for the heir of the greatest name in the world. I think he can save France. I will say it, I will write it, and, please God, I will print it.

What you have done for my father and for my family will never be forgotten by me. In raising the

name of Napoleon as high as I am able, in defending it as a loyal soldier against every attack, against every insult, I have the twofold task of discharging a duty and paying a debt.

I am, with deep respect, your Majesty's most humble servant,

VICTOR HUGO.

To M. CORDELLIER-DELANOUE.

Sunday, 27th September [1831].

It is I, my dear good friend, who at once abandon the idea of *Louis XVI.*,[1]—at anyrate, until after the performance of *Strafford.* You may depend on this. There, my dear friend, the pleasure which I feel in making this sacrifice for you outweighs the sacrifice, if there is any sacrifice in it.

If I can hit upon any other contrivance, such as mentioning Bonaparte at the very beginning of the play, and giving up the effect of the name thrown in at the end, I will submit it to you as between friends, *ut decet.* And in any case, I repeat, *Louis XVI.* will only be performed when you wish, and not at all if you so desire it.

I now remember perfectly well that you told me about your idea, and I agree that mine has a great

[1] At that time Victor Hugo had entertained the idea of writing a play in which he would have confronted Bonaparte with Louis XVI., as M. Cordellier-Delanoue had done with Cromwell and Charles I.

resemblance to it. You have a prior right, then. It is the first time, I can honestly say, that I detect myself in the very act of plagiarism. This distresses me. Is it possible that the Archbishop of Granada is already departing from his high principles?

Besides, your line is sublime, and contains an idea which is the finest of all, and which I have not—

. . . Charles premier, je me nomme Cromwell.

There is nothing so grand as this in my piece. Bonaparte does not say the line to Louis XVI., and Bonaparte is not the regicide of Louis XVI.

My warmest thanks for your kind and generous letter. I do not wish *Strafford* to lose a hair of his head, nor a single line, and I am looking forward to applauding it before long with all the power of my hands and my lungs.—Yours fraternally,

VICTOR.

To M. CORDELLIER-DELANOUE.

30*th September* [1831].

I thank you, my dear Delanoue, for your generous and warm-hearted letter, as one of the most valued proofs of friendship that you could give me; but I stick to my guns. *Louis XVI.* must come after *Strafford.* What I wrote to you, what I told you, was not a mere compliment, but sincerely meant. I had quite made up my mind, and when I received your letter I had already

abandoned *Louis XVI.* for a fresh *victim.* Go on with *Strafford*, then, my friend! I am as fond of it as I am of you. What comes from your heart will always appeal to mine.

VICTOR.

1832

To BARON TAYLOR.

Thursday, 7th September.

I am going away, my dear Taylor, the day after to-morrow, Saturday, at one o'clock in the afternoon; I shall return to Paris on purpose for the reading of the piece;[1] but as I shall be obliged to return to Bièvre[2] at six o'clock for dinner, and as the journey takes three hours, the reading must be over *by three o'clock at latest*, and consequently it must begin at latest at *half-past ten.*

I shall be glad, therefore, if you will call the meeting for ten o'clock that day. I shall be obliged myself to get up at six o'clock; it is hard work, but I must do it. You will find on the opposite page a sketch of the distribution of parts. I shall need your kind advice on this, and it would be very good of you to come and see me about it for a few moments, either to-morrow

[1] *Le Roi s'Amuse.* [2] Les Roches, M. Bertin's house.

or the day after, before twelve. You know what complete confidence I have in you.

Does Mlle. Mars accept? Does Monrose wish for a part? In case Mlle. Mars fails me, which do you advise me to take—Mlle. Anaïs or Mlle. Brocard? I should like to talk to you also about Desmousseaux, whom I like and esteem, and for whom I will write a good part before long. You see, I have endless things to say to you, apart from our talk as friends.

VICTOR.

It is very desirable that M. Ciceri and the costume designer should be at the theatre on the day of the reading, so that I can speak to them.

PROPOSED DISTRIBUTION OF PARTS.

FRANÇOIS 1er	M. BOCAGE.
TRIBOULET	M. LIGIER.
BLANCHE	MLLE. MARS or ANAÏS.
M. DE SAINT-VALLIER	M. JOANNY.
SALTABADIL	M. MONROSE or BEAUVALLET.
MAGUELONNE	MLLE. DUPONT.
CLÉMENT MAROT	M. SAMSON.
M. DE PIENNE	M. GEFFROY.
M. DE PARDAILLAN (*page*)	MME. MENJAUD.
M. DE COSSÉ	M. DUPARAY.
MME. DE COSSÉ	MME. MASSON.
M. DE GORDES	M. MARIUS.
M. DE VIC	M. BOUCHET.
M. DE LA TOUR LANDRY	M. MIRECOUR.
MM. DE MONTCHENU, DE BRION, and DE MONTMORENCY	M. REGNIER. / M. ALBERT. / M. MONTLAUR.
DAME BÉRARDE	MME. TOUSEZ.
A WOMAN OF THE PEOPLE	MLLE. PETIT.
A DOCTOR	M. DUMILATRE.

VICTOR HUGO.

You see, I need your advice for these secondary parts, which, however, can be distributed later without any inconvenience.

To MLLE. LOUISE BERTIN.

Monday, 22nd October 1832.

MADEMOISELLE,—Will you allow me to add a third scrawl to the two frightful ones that I am sending you? Didine and Charlie have scribbled to their hearts' content, as you see; and I ask forgiveness for them as well as for myself.

We received your kind and delightful letter this morning. Didine begged me to read it aloud, which I did, to the general satisfaction of my tribe of little ones. My wife was moved to tears by the nice affectionate way in which you write to the poor children. I assure you all our time is spent in regretting *Les Roches*, when I am not in Saltabadil's and Maguelonne's cave. At every hour of the day we are reminded of something pleasant that we did when we were with you. Ligier told me yesterday at the rehearsal[1] that I was reconstructing the French stage; I would far rather build a theatre of cards with you.

The weather is fine, and I am glad to think that the autumn rains have not prevented M. Bertin from enjoying his walks in the beautiful garden of *Les Roches*. Mind

[1] Of *Le Roi s'Amuse*.

you tell him as well as Mme. Bertin how devoted I am to you all.

You do not mention Edward, who I hope is working like a horse, and who is very lucky in not being obliged to have his landscapes acted. Give him my kind remembrances, please.

My wife tells me specially to beg you not to work too hard, and to think a great deal of us. I need not recur to my deep and respectful attachment to you.

I will have a search made for your knife, but Didine declares she is sure she did not carry it off with her. I think you will find it in some forgotten corner of the paint-box.

VICTOR HUGO.

To MADEMOISELLE LOUISE BERTIN.

PARIS, 30*th October* 1832.

In spite of your prohibition, mademoiselle, I am writing to you again: you must allow me to add a few words to the style and spelling of my chicks. I am sure I don't know where Antoni[1] would look for the *naïf* in art if these letters did not delight him. They delight *me*, I assure you; I give the children a free rein, and the two little rogues write you everything that comes into their heads. I must ask you to forgive them.

[1] Antoni Deschamps.

I must also ask your pardon on my own account for having taken the liberty of sending you a printed composition of mine recently. I have ventured to present you with your libretto[1] in three volumes, and on China paper. There are a few new pages in it here and there, for which I ask your indulgence in case you read them.

You must really pity me, in the first place, and a great deal, for having left *Les Roches*, then a little for having been for a week in all the hateful confusion of a move, carried out by the aid of one of those so-called convenient machines which helped so many poor wretches to move in a body to their last home at the time of the cholera. For a whole week I have been in a chaos, nailing and hammering and looking like a scarecrow. It is abominable. Fill up the intervals of all this with the rehearsals which I am obliged to attend, and the portrait[2] to be seen in Ingres' studio, which I want so much to see, and I have not yet been to see! Here are a lot of *sees* in the same sentence. But what can you expect? It is the style of an upholsterer's assistant that I am treating you to to-day.

You can imagine how I regret *Les Roches*, the delightful days, the delightful evenings, and the houses of cards, and *Jamais dans ces beaux lieux* and *Phœbus, l'heure appelle.*

My play will be performed between the 12th and the 15th of November. Farewell, mademoiselle. I

[1] A copy of *Notre-Dame de Paris*, the novel from which the opera of *Esmeralda* was constructed, the music being by Mlle. Louise Bertin.

[2] Of the elder M. Bertin.

know of a good and happy family for which I have a heartfelt affection—and that is yours. I would give the rest of the world for *Les Roches*, and the rest of the people in it for your family. Farewell once more; that is not for long. When will you return?

Your respectful and devoted *collaborateur*,

VICTOR.

To the Editor of the "Constitutionnel."

PARIS, *26th November* 1832.[1]

DEAR SIR,—I am informed that some of the generous young students in the schools and studios intend going to the *Théâtre Français* this evening or to-morrow to demand the performance of *Le Roi s'Amuse*, and to protest emphatically against the unprecedented act of arbitrariness of which this piece has been the *victim*. I think, dear sir, that there are other ways of punishing this illegal proceeding, and I shall resort to them. Permit me, therefore, to make use of your paper for this occasion to beg all friends of liberty, of art and of thought, to abstain from a violent demonstration, which might perhaps end in the riot which the Government has so long been trying to obtain.

Accept, dear sir, the assurance of my distinguished consideration.

VICTOR HUGO.

[1] *Le Roi s'Amuse* had been prohibited on the 23rd of November the day after the first performance.

To MADEMOISELLE LOUISE BERTIN.

27th November 1832.

MADEMOISELLE,—Whatever may be the unfortunate political and literary disputes that have arisen, and in which I have the consolation of not having been once in the wrong,[1] I trust you have not doubted me for one moment. You know that I am thoroughly devoted to you, mademoiselle, to your good father (whom I love as if he were my own, and who, I am sure, is more grieved than I am at the unprecedented event which has befallen me), and to all who are dear to you. This occurrence will ever have the happy result in my eyes of convincing you that the relations which I have been proud and happy to enter into with you, whose fine character and high talents I admire so much, have been inspired solely by disinterested feelings of personal attachment. Pray tell your kind parents not to stand on ceremony with me in any way, not to think themselves bound to lay any restraint on the literary or political controversies which they may deem necessary to start against me in the new position in which my enemies of every description have placed me; that I shall always be anxious to comply with your smallest wish, whatever may happen; and that I shall never give up the work on which we are both engaged,[2] unless it be you who, in your own interests, think fit to repudiate an association which entails such disturbance.

[1] The lawsuit about *Le Roi s'Amuse*.
[2] *La Esmeralda*.

You know me, Mademoiselle Louise, and I am sure you have already said all this to yourself; I am convinced that you rely implicitly on me. Answer for me, then, I beg you. I will go and see you. I will ask for your commands, as in the past. I will place all my leisure time at your disposal; I will also ask you to pity me a little—me, a quiet, serious man—for being thus violently uprooted from all my habits, and for having to sustain a political as well as a literary conflict.

Where are our happy days at *Les Roches*?—Yours, with the deepest respect and devotion,

VICTOR HUGO.

To MONSIEUR EUGÈNE RENDUEL.

[*December* 1832.]

I saw Carrel last night; everything is arranged. He has been most kind. I will tell you all the details. Sainte-Beuve can write the article as he likes, and take it to-day with the extract from the preface. Carrel will put it all in. Carrel wants, besides, a long political article on the case one of these days. You know that Odilon Barrot will be my counsel: come and see me.

Here are a few lines for the *Journal des Débats*, written last night for me by one of my friends. The letters are too large, and would look ridiculous. You had better have it copied out again and take it at once.—Yours most sincerely,

VICTOR H.

To M. MÉRIMÉE, *Secretary to M. le Comte d'Argout.*

[*December* 1832.]

From what you have done me the honour of writing to me, it appears that you had nothing whatever to do with the influences which determined the Government to illegally suspend my play. In a case of this kind, the word of one man of honour is sufficient for another. I hasten, therefore, to assure you that everything relating to you personally in the circumstance, which I have rather hinted at than related, without mentioning any name whatever, disappears of itself in face of your protest.

My own loyalty, in fact, imposes on me the duty of leaving no slur on yours. My case is of a general nature, from which nothing should make me swerve, and not a personal one, and I am anxious not to put myself in any way in the wrong throughout.

I hope that my conduct on this occasion will prove to you that nothing, so far as I am concerned, lessens the reciprocal esteem to which you allude.

V. H.

To MONSIEUR LE BARON TAYLOR.

3*rd December* [1832].

All that has happened, my dear Taylor, is not your fault, nor that of the *Comédie*, I know. I shall, however,

be obliged to bring an action for damages against the *Théâtre Français*, because, unfortunately, this is the only way of effecting a political impeachment of the Ministry. But I still remain your friend. Odilon Barrot will be my counsel; the case will create a great sensation, but I should not like anything to be said which might injure or compromise you personally. I felt I must come to an understanding with you about this. I put myself in your place, and I think it is my duty, as a friend and an honest man, to treat you as I should wish you to treat me if I were in your place and you in mine. A loyal war to the knife on the Government, but all possible consideration consistent with the necessities of the cause for you, Taylor, whom I like and esteem. So come and breakfast with me to-morrow morning, if you can. I will wait for you till *eleven o'clock*.

You will receive with this note your copy of *Le Roi s'Amuse* and of *Notre-Dame de Paris*.—Yours sincerely,

VICTOR HUGO.

To MADEMOISELLE LOUISE BERTIN.

Sunday evening, 29th [1832].

Just now, mademoiselle, my Didine remarked sadly that we were with you a week ago. Having said which, she set to work to write to you, and so did I, with the result that our two letters, written together, will reach you together, inspired with the same thought.

You know, do you not, that you are always in our minds and always loved? There are four little children here who often talk of you, and their father who thinks of you still oftener.

The last of the fine weather has departed. Mud and winter are with us again. Paris is not cheerful. You have the sky and the dead leaves. That is better than the Rue Saint-Honoré and its crowd of carts.

We hope Mme. Bertin is improving steadily. This was the whole subject of our conversation at dinner to-day.

Scold me, I have not seen Duponchel yet. On the other hand, I have seen Vedel—and that rhymes. I daresay it is a matter of indifference to you, but I am bringing a *procès* against the *Français*. That rhymes too. But I could not help it.

The best thing I could do would be to go to *Les Roches* and have a talk with your good father, with you, with Edward, and walk to the foot of your beautiful hills, and forget all about sheriffs' officers, tribunals of commerce, and the Bourse—that pretty, stupid temple dotted about with stockbrokers.

But destiny impels me. I am furious with the *Comédie Française*, and must relieve my feelings by a lawsuit. The extraordinary thing is, that it seems I am sure to win with heavy damages and interest, which the Government will have to pay, according to what the members of the *Comédie* say.

Excuse all this gossip. This stupid lawsuit is the only bit of news I have for you. We have talked of nothing else at home for the last week, and I pass on some of my ennui to you.

Permit me to add to it the fresh assurance of an old, deep, respectful, and devoted attachment.

VICTOR H.

1833

To MADEMOISELLE LOUISE BERTIN.

15th February 1833.

MADEMOISELLE, — Here are two copies of the *scenario* for you at last—one for you and one for M. Véron.[1]

I thought you might want to refer to this detailed plan.

I am still undecided about the last scene. It is only a trifle, and yet, I assure you, it is very difficult to hit on anything which is not either wholly unconnected with the poem or flat and commonplace.

From what you told me the other night, I agree with you about the apotheosis, and I give up the sky altogether.

I wanted to bring you this parcel myself yesterday evening. But my wife took me by divine right to *Bertrand et Raton*, which bored us in a prodigious and surprising manner.

[1] Manager of the opera.

With the *scenario* I send the manuscript, and the scraps of paper it contained.

Good-bye for the present, mademoiselle.

To KING JOSEPH.

PARIS, *27th February* 1833.

SIRE,—I take the first safe opportunity of replying to your letter. M. Presles, who is leaving for London, has consented to take this letter to your Majesty. Allow me, Sire, to treat you always as a sovereign. Nothing, in my opinion, can unmake the kings made by Napoleon. No mortal hand can remove the august mark which that great man has set upon your brow. I was deeply touched by the sympathy your Majesty showed me on the occasion of my lawsuit about *Le Roi s'Amuse*. You love liberty, Sire; therefore liberty loves you. Permit me to enclose with this letter a copy of the speech I delivered at the Tribunal of Commerce. I am very anxious you should read a correct report of it, instead of the inaccurate one in the newspapers. I should be very glad, Sire, to go to London and press that royal hand which has so often pressed my father's. M. Presles will explain to your Majesty the obstacles which at this moment prevent me from realising such a cherished wish; they must be of an insurmountable nature to stop me. M. Presles will tell you something of what I should say to you, Sire, were I fortunate enough to see you. I

should have many and varied things to say to you. It is impossible that your family should be without a future, however great the loss of last year.[1] The name you bear is the greatest in history. True, we are tending rather to a republic than to a monarchy; but to a philosopher like you the external form of government matters little. You have proved, Sire, that you could be a citizen of a republic with dignity. Farewell, Sire; the day when I shall be permitted to press your hand in both of mine will be one of the happiest of my life. In the meanwhile your letters make me a proud and happy man.

V. H.

To VICTOR PAVIE.

PARIS, 31*st March* 1833.

I have been intending to write to you for ages, my friend. It is true that with you, whom I love best, I appear to be forgetful, careless, absent, absorbed in my own affairs, and yet I assure you nothing is further from the truth. For the true friends that I know I possess—and you are one of the best and the dearest—I have always a profound thought, unceasing, tender, and melancholy, in which I indulge in my hours of leisure and reverie. Thinking of an absent friend is one of the most solemn and most tranquillising pleasures of life. I

[1] The death of the Roi de Rome.

do not write often, because I am lazy and almost blind; and then, you see, Pavie, in friendship as in art, as in everything else, it often happens that writing spoils one's thought.

You, whose existence is not torn from its moorings by a continual whirlwind; you, who live at Angers and not in Paris; you, who have no public life which is constantly upsetting your private life,—you ought to write to me often, my friend, and relate to me the history of your thought and mind in long letters. It would be kind of you to do it; the contemplation of your peace and happiness would be a rest to me.

By the way, there was a very remarkable article the other day in your *Feuilleton d'Angers*, only much too favourable to me, signed E. R. Do you know the author of it? Thank him for me. If I knew where to write, I should like to do it myself.

Write to me fully, my dear Pavie. Tell me about yourself, your good father, your brother, if you have any news of him. Tell me how life has gone with you.

When are you coming to Paris?

I love and embrace you.

VICTOR H.

TO VARIOUS PERSONS

To MONSIEUR JOUSLIN DE LA SALLE, *Royal Commissioner at the Théâtre Français.*

21st March 1833.

SIR,—Allow me to introduce and recommend M. Esquiros to you, the young author of a tragedy called *James Douglas.* The *Théâtre Français* appears to me to be especially instituted for the encouragement of young authors in the paths of poetry and art. M. Esquiros is one of those who deserve to have the way made smooth for them. I shall be glad to hear, sir, that he has met with a favourable reception from you.

Pray accept the assurance of my distinguished consideration.

VICTOR HUGO.

To M. HAREL, *Manager of the Porte-Saint-Martin Theatre.*

1st May, 7 A.M.

SIR,—On returning home yesterday at midnight I expected to find a reply from you to my last letter. I asked my wife if any letter had come for me; from the confused manner in which she answered in the negative, I presumed that a letter had really come from you, that she had opened it, and was keeping it back from me. I concluded from this that the letter probably contained a

decisive reply about the matter we have in hand, and of which my wife unfortunately has some suspicions. I fear that you may have fixed in this letter some time to-day for our meeting. As I am anxious not to miss an appointment of this kind, I lose no time in informing you that I will be at your house this morning at nine o'clock precisely, to settle the place, the time, and the weapons.

Accept, sir, the assurance of my distinguished consideration.

V. H.

To MADEMOISELLE LOUISE BERTIN.

14th July 1833.

MADEMOISELLE, — Here is a letter from Poupée,[1] which is more like a cat's than a doll's. You will excuse her when I tell you that she wrote it in bed, where she has been laid up for the last few days with a feverish attack. It is this slight illness which has prevented Poupée and me from giving you news of the Place Royale before.

I enclose the few lines which you asked me for. I hope you have not been inconvenienced for the want of them.

I am still over head and ears in work, spurred on by Renduel on the one side and Harel on the other, who are

[1] Léopoldine Hugo.

certainly the most tiresome men of business in existence. I told Harel he could not have my play before the 1st of September, and, in spite of his lamentations, incantations, and groans, I stuck to it. May Saint-George and Saint-Martin help him!

To-day is Sunday, and a glorious day at *Les Roches*. You cannot imagine how charming and desirable your life in the country, with its poetry and music, appears to us poor workers of the Quartier Saint-Antoine, condemned to turn the wheel which shoots money into the pocket of a publisher and impresario, and not into our own.

Your trees are splendid, I warrant; your valley is admirable; your piano is full of poetry and harmony. You are still in the attractive stage of the work which we are doing together; but when you get to the theatre and the greenroom, you will tell me what you think of my present life as compared with yours. When you have got as far as Véron, you shall give me your opinion of Harel.

Farewell, mademoiselle.

VICTOR H.

To VICTOR PAVIE.

PARIS, *25th July* [1833].

No one understands me, then—not even you, Pavie, whom I, however, understand so well, you whose mind is so lofty and indulgent! This is a blow to me!

Six weeks ago I published an article in *l'Europe littéraire.* Read the paragraph ending with *Deus centrum et locus rerum,* and you will see my ideas. Think over them in the meaning I give to them. I believe it will modify your present opinion of me.

The theatre is a kind of temple, humanity is a sort of religion. Meditate on this, Pavie; it is a piece of great impiety or great piety: *I* believe I am accomplishing a mission.

I have never committed more faults than during this year, and yet I have never been a better man. I am worth far more now than in the days of my *innocence,* which you regret. Formerly I was innocent; now I can make allowances for others. God knows, this is a great step in advance.

I have a dear kind friend at my side, the angel who knows it too, whom you venerate as I do, and who forgives and loves me. To love and forgive is not an attribute of man, but of God and woman.

You are indeed right in saying that you are my friend. To whom else would I write like this?

There! I see my future course clearly before me, and I walk in faith, my eyes fixed on the goal. I may fall on the road, but I shall fall forwards. When I have finished my life and my work, all—faults and defects, will and fatality, good and evil—will be judged.

Go on loving me; I embrace you.

V. H.

TO VARIOUS PERSONS

To DAVID D'ANGERS.

PARIS, *3rd August* 1833.

I have just come back from the country, my dear David, and find all the bronze treasures you have sent me. It is just like you. Always the great artist and the kind friend!

Three weeks ago I wrote a short article in *l'Europe littéraire* on your affair with Thiers. I ordered it to be sent to you. Has this been done? Yours sincerely,

VICTOR HUGO.

To ALEXANDRE DUMAS.

2nd November [1833].

There is still more to be said against me, my dear Dumas, than you can conjecture or imagine. The author of the article is one of my friends; it was I who helped to get him on the staff of the *Débats*. The article was shown me by M. Bertin the elder at *Les Roches* six weeks ago. This is the evidence against me. I do not propose to tell you the evidence in my favour; I want you to do for me what I did for you only a day or two ago—that is, to imagine or conjecture it.

Do not forget, however, that you would be the most unjust and ungrateful of men if you thought for a

moment that I have not behaved to you like a good and true friend in this matter.

I do not write more about it, because on this occasion it is not I who owe you an explanation, but you who owe me thanks.

But I will tell you all about it when you come to see me; ten minutes' talk will explain matters better than ten letters.

Do not believe of me what I would not believe of you.

VICTOR HUGO.

P.S.—I am keeping two stalls for you for the first performance of *Marie Tudor*. Do you want any more?

To MADEMOISELLE LOUISE BERTIN.

5th December 1833.

Here is Quasimodo's song, mademoiselle. I have made it as cheerful as I could, but it seems to me impossible for it to be altogether playful.

But you will decide. Your musical perception must, after all, be paramount, and my rhymes are the most humble servants of your notes.

You will see, too, that I have scrupulously followed your injunctions. It is always a great pleasure to me to supply a subject for your imagination, a framework for your edifice, and a canvas for your embroidery.

Here is a piece of coarse cloth; cover it with gold arabesques—that is your business. I am more than ever your most affectionate and devoted friend,

VICTOR H.

1834

To MONSEIGNEUR LE DUC D'ORLÉANS.

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS,—Will your Royal Highness entertain the request of one stranger for another? I hardly dare to hope it; but I shall feel I have satisfied my conscience in making the attempt.

Here is a letter I have just received. It comes with a number of others applying for help to me, a poor useless poet. This one touched and interested me more than all. I do not know the writer. But if the facts are true (and the genuine tone of the letter inclines me to believe it), they are deserving of attention. It is a father who is pleading for his son, an old professor pleading for his books. I send this letter on to your Royal Highness.

Pardon me the liberty I am taking. We live in times when everyone publishes his ambition, and so I make known mine. It is confined to trying to do a little good, in an obscure and humble fashion, and to help those

who can do it with power and effect. Doing good commends itself to your generous heart; it is always within the reach of your large fortune. You belong to the category of those who are both willing and able. It is perfectly natural to apply to you.

To MONSEIGNEUR LE DUC D'ORLÉANS.

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS,—I have carried out your Royal Highness's charitable intentions. Allow me to forward the receipt of the poor old man whom you have deigned to help.

He begs me to express his unbounded gratitude to your Royal Highness. Mine is equally deep. The ready grace with which your Royal Highness received my humble recommendation went to my heart. I shall not forget it.

After having carried the boon to the suppliant, I am now the bearer of his gratitude to the benefactor. This part has a great attraction for me. A mere onlooker in this affair, I have been able to see with what grace your Royal Highness practises the humblest, as it is the greatest, of all virtues—charity. To-day your Royal Highness reaps the fruits of your good action, in the devotion of a man in distress. You are happy; he is grateful. And I participate in both feelings alike. I am not less happy than you, nor less grateful than he.

TO VARIOUS PERSONS

To THE DIRECTOR *of the "Revue du Progrès social."*

1st June 1834.

DEAR SIR,—I have read most attentively the *Revue du Progrès social*, and the statement of principles which you have been good enough to communicate to me. All enlightened and intelligent men who have studied the past with a view to the future have long had a common idea on the future destiny of society—an idea which, born and developed separately in each individual brain at the present moment, will some day, and I hope before long, culminate in one great general undertaking.

This undertaking will be the slow, peaceful, and logical formation of a social order in which the new principles set free by the French Revolution will at last find a means of combining with the eternal and primordial principles of all civilisation. Your Review and your statement lead towards this grand goal by direct and safe paths, the inclines of which seem to me to be carefully graduated. I agree with you on almost every point, and I am glad of it.

Let us all co-operate, then, each in his own sphere and according to his own particular law, in the great substitution of social for political questions. The whole problem lies there. Let us endeavour to rally all the choicer spirits to a realisable conception of progress, and to extract a superior party, bent on civilisation, from all the inferior parties who do not know what they want.

I have no doubt of your success. Truth, dear sir,

sometimes has long periods of gestation, but never miscarries.

VICTOR HUGO.

To MONSIEUR THIERS, *Minister of the Interior.*

PARIS, 15*th June* 1834.

MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE,—At this moment there is a woman in Paris who is dying of hunger.

Her name is Mlle. Mercœur. She has published several volumes of poems; this is not the place to speak of their merit, and, besides, I do not feel qualified to do so; but her name is doubtless known to you.

Five years ago, under the Ministry of M. de Martignac, a literary pension of 1200 francs was granted to her, which has been reduced to 900 francs since 1830.

Her mother lives with her, and they have nothing but this pension to live on in Paris. They are both *literally* dying of hunger.

You can order an inquiry to be made.

In 1823 King Louis XVIII. spontaneously assigned me a pension or annual allowance of 2000 francs on the funds of the Ministry of the Interior. In 1832 I gave up this pension of my own free will.

At that time your predecessor, M. d'Argout, informed me that he did not accept my surrender of it, that he would continue to consider the money as mine, and that he would not dispose of it in favour of anyone.

As my renunciation was absolute and final, it was no business of mine to see what the Minister would do with the pension.

To-day, while admitting that I have no claim whatever on this pension, I request you, in case the Minister should have persisted in his resolve, and should not have disposed of the fund to anyone else, to transfer it to Mlle. Mercœur. If you consent to this, I shall feel doubly pleased at having given it up. This pension will be far better bestowed on Mlle. Mercœur than on me. The sum of 1200 francs, added to what Mlle. Mercœur already receives, will almost enable her to live with her mother. Give it to her, Monsieur le Ministre; it will be an act of charity. We shall both be glad—you for having done it, and I for having advised it.

Accept, Monsieur le Ministre, the assurance of my distinguished consideration.

VICTOR HUGO.

To CHARLES NODIER.[1]

If I were not buried in the depths of a theatre, how I should like, my dear Charles, to go and shake you by the hand, and throw my cloak at your feet and shout *Hosannah* with the rest. A glory has entered the Academy, which is a rare event! And so we are applauding the Academy, which is not less rare!

[1] After his election to the Academy.

I am really delighted to see you there. I am very fond of you, believe me.

VICTOR.

1835

To MADEMOISELLE LOUISE BERTIN.

Tuesday morning, 22nd May 1835.

MADEMOISELLE,—Although Poupée had undertaken to give you news of us all, allow me to add a word or two to her letter. My wife proposes dining with you at *Les Roches* on Thursday evening at six o'clock. I will come and fetch her the next day (Friday), and bring her back to Paris in the evening. Didine will accompany her, and I am thinking of bringing Boulanger with me, if your good father will have us both. I will bring you what you asked me for for our night scene.

We are greatly looking forward to this excursion to *Les Roches*, to spending a day in the hospitable house in which we have passed so many happy weeks. I hope you will not refuse to sing us something out of *Notre-Dame*. I, in particular, whose days fly by in unremitting toil, shall greatly need a little of your greenery, and a great deal of your music, to rest my eyes and my mind.

Talking of music, I am having lessons on the piano from Listz and Didine. I am beginning to play *Jamais dans les beaux lieux* satisfactorily with one finger.

I cannot think why Poupée has not told you of this great event in her letter.

Forgive me, mademoiselle, for telling you of these trifles. If I did not know that you are very busy, and if I were not afraid that you would think yourself under an obligation to answer my letters, I would write to you occasionally. You told me one day you liked getting *all kinds* of letters. I will write you some; this is one of them.

When I wish to recall happy and well-spent days among the happiest and best spent in my life, I go into the drawing-room and meditate for a few moments in front of the little card-carriage we made together. It is our masterpiece, till *Notre-Dame* appears.

Farewell, Mademoiselle Louise; we shall meet on Friday. Tell your kind father that I am devoted to him and to you, and pray accept with your usual kindness the respectful affection of your *signor poeta.*

VICTOR H.

To MONSIEUR ANTOINE DE LATOUR, *Tutor of M. de Montpensier, at the Tuileries.*

LES ROCHES, 18*th October* 1835.

Thank you for your kind letter. I only paid a flying visit to Tréport, quite obscure and lost in the

crowd. I should have much liked to shake you by the hand, but I should have wanted you alone, and my friends must be kind enough to forgive the fancies of a dreamy unsociable man. I had fled from Paris at the approach of the July anniversary. I do not like the noise of the capital on this occasion. And then I thought I was running away from a fête, and it turned out that I had escaped a catastrophe.[1] On the whole, I was delighted with my little trip. I prefer the spectacle of the sea to that of the Chambers, and I find the movement of the ocean finer than the march of events. Now I am back in Paris, or nearly so. Come and see me when you have time. In the meanwhile think of me as of a friend.

V.

To MADEMOISELLE LOUISE BERTIN.

PARIS, 19*th October* 1833.

You wrote a very charming letter to my wife, mademoiselle, in which I shared. It is very nice of you to have liked those lines. That was all I wished for them. There is so much true and grand poetry in you that all that comes from us must seem poor to you.

Here I am finishing the volume,[2] part of which grew among the flowers at *Les Roches*, and the rest in the

[1] The attempt of Fieschi on the 28th July 1835.
[2] The *Voix Intérieures*.

crannies of the pavements of Paris. Hence this volume presents two aspects—one poetic, which comes from your garden; and the other political, which comes from what is trodden on by everybody.

Be indulgent and kind to the whole. We often talk of you here, in our evenings, which are already growing long,—of you, of Edward, and your good and venerated parents. And as soon as the name *Louise* is mentioned, one is sure to see four little heads turn round. The dear little souls are very fond of you, and if it were not part of their happiness, I, who am of a jealous nature, should feel quite jealous.

We shall meet soon, mademoiselle; talk of us sometimes under the falling leaves of your fine trees.

We love you with unfading affection. I add to it my deep and sincere devotion.—Your respectful friend,

VICTOR H.

APPENDIX

ACADÉMIE DES JEUX FLORAUX
1819–1823

To MONSIEUR PINAUD, *Permanent Secretary to the Académie des Jeux Floraux, Toulouse.*

PARIS, 29*th March* 1819.

DEAR SIR,—The flattering news you give me, and your still more flattering letter, have caused me very great pleasure, which, however, would have been still greater if the decisions of the Academy had been more favourable to my brother. However severe they must have appeared to him, I must do him the justice to acknowledge that he never complained of them for one moment, and that he was the first to recognise their equity; he begs me, dear sir, to thank you in his name for the encomiums and encouragement which you are kind enough to bestow on him. His ode on the Duke of Enghien, which he is now endeavouring to make more worthy of the Academy, will doubtless prove to you how eagerly he responds to your request.

As for me, dear sir, I am as much overcome by the indulgence shown me by the Academy as I am filled

with gratitude for the signal proofs of it with which I have been honoured. Be so good as to assure your colleagues that I look on their approbation rather as an encouragement than as a reward, and that in future all my efforts will be directed towards rendering myself worthy of the glorious palm-leaves they have been pleased to award me, and which I feel I am still far from deserving. If time permits me, I shall try to prove how anxious I am to make the two prize poems as nearly perfect as possible, by scrupulously assenting to their criticism. As the opportunity offers, I think it right, dear sir, to communicate to you the corrections which I have already been able to make, or to which I think I can show good reasons for objecting.

Ode on Henry IV.

1*st Strophe.*—I shall perhaps be obliged to leave the word "*puis*"; the only word that I know of to replace it is "*ensuite*," and "*ensuite*" is very prosaic. The conjunction "*et*" would, I think, unite the two portions of the sentence too closely.

2*nd Strophe.*—The only right version is "*Sylla détrône Marius*"; a few lines further on comes "*Mutilait l'airain renversé.*"

3*rd Strophe.*—For the two verses objected to, one might substitute these—

> Trajan domine encor les champs que de Tibère
> Couvrent les temples abattus.

And, as it happens, Trajan's column rises near the site of the *Sacrum Tiberinum* and the *Via Caprænsis* (*Antiq. de la ville de Rome*).

APPENDIX

One could get rid of "*souvent, quand, dans*" by saying—

> Souvent, dans les horreurs des discordes civiles
> Quand l'effroi planait sur les villes,
> Aux cris des peuples révoltés, etc.

4th Strophe.—To prove the fact in natural history, which is the basis of the comparison objected to, I extract the following from the 12th note to M. Plumier's *Observations Zoologiques.*

> He (M. Lemonnier) again states as a fact what some contemporary naturalists have regarded merely as an effort of his imagination. According to him, the tiger of the deserts of the Sahara and of Beria, *not satisfied with having devoured its victims, vents his fury on the shadow of their skeletons.* To this it was thoughtlessly objected that as the shadow of a body cannot present any appearance of life, it is as absurd to imagine a tiger falling upon a shadow as on a stone or the trunk of a tree. The son of the celebrated Borda, a traveller who can be trusted, confirms our naturalist's assertion, not only from what he has observed himself, but by a reflexion, simple and yet profound, as it had hitherto escaped the notice of other *savans.* "I have seen," says M. de Borda, "African tigers brought to Damascus and shut up in the vast arena at Magid-Patar, devouring with revolting ferocity oxen and hyenas that had been given to them alive, and, having satisfied their first hunger, spending whole days in watching the shadow of the fleshless skeletons of these animals. *It is probable that the play of the shadow gave in the eyes of the tigers a semblance of life to what had lost all semblance of bodily shape.* This explains," etc., etc.

I hope, dear sir, to have the honour of sending you the remaining corrections with my brother's ode on the Duke of Enghien.

I am obliged to you, dear sir, for having been so good as to acquaint me with the fate of the *Derniers Bardes* and the *Canadienne.* In obtaining the honour of a reading, these two compositions obtain even more than I expected of them.

You beg me, dear sir, to decide at once between the flowers or their pecuniary value. I prefer the flowers; they will always remind me of the indulgence of the Academy, which, in awarding the prize to me, no doubt thought more of my extreme youthfulness than of my slender capacity.

Accept, dear sir, the expression of the very deep gratitude and respect with which I have the honour to remain, your most obedient, humble servant,

V.-M. HUGO.

PARIS, *9th April* 1819.

DEAR SIR,—I have the honour to send you such of the corrections pointed out as I am now able to accept. The passages which I have not been able to change are few in number, and I venture to hope that if I have not complied with the Academy on some points, it is not for lack of goodwill or readiness to be taught. Their indulgence has been too great; the marks of it have been too flattering for me not to have exerted all my feeble abilities to make myself worthy both of the one and the other.

I do not flatter myself that I have been equally successful in every point. But I must confess, and you perhaps will not be surprised at it, dear sir, that it has given me more trouble to touch up these odes than to compose them. That is the chief reason why I am doubtful of the success of my work. When I hesitated

between two versions, I thought it right to submit them both for the decision of the Academy.

I need not tell you, dear sir, that I am not at all anxious that the other renderings which I send you should be adopted. Should the Academy prefer the original text, it would be doing me a real service in retaining it.

Pray accept the assurance of the respect with which I have the honour to be, dear sir, your very obedient, humble servant,

V.-M. HUGO.

Ode on the Reinstalment of the Statue of Henry IV.

2nd Strophe.—7th line, read "*Sylla détrône Marius.*"

3rd Strophe.—For the 3rd, 5th, and 6th lines substitute—

Trajan domine encor les champs que de Tibère
Couvrent les temples abattus.

Souvent, dans les horreurs des discordes civiles
Quand l'effroi planait sur les villes,
Aux cris des peuples révoltés, etc.

6th Strophe.—To make the 7th line sound a little less harsh, it might read—

Enleva sitôt le trépas.

9th Strophe.—Instead of the 5th and 6th lines read—

Désormais dans ses yeux, en volant à la gloire,
Nous viendrons puiser la victoire, etc.

We shall have got rid of the word "*carnage*," but I fear this new metaphor may be rather risky.

11*th Strophe.*—When composing it I noticed the want of continuity in the ideas which the Academy has remarked, but, not being able to remedy it, I managed to persuade myself that a lyric poet has the privilege of leaving the idea which had first struck him in this incomplete state and of developing the next that presented itself to his mind. But the just criticism of the Academy made me reflect that a licence of this kind would end in giving him the right to be unintelligible. I have tried once more to remove this blemish, but without success, and it is with much regret that I find myself obliged to leave such a conspicuous defect uncorrected.

My reiterated endeavours to eliminate some of the articles which abound in the last lines of the 18th strophe have also been fruitless. I hope the Academy will give me credit for them.

Ode sur les Vierges de Verdun.

Not having had time to condense the introduction to this ode, I was prepared to adduce Horace's ode in defence of the interrogative form—

Quò, quò, scelesti, ruitis?

and the ode to Lydia—

Lydia, dic, per omnes
Te Deos oro, Sybarin cur properas amando
Perdere? Cur apricum
Oderit campum, patiens pulveris atque solis, etc.

I think, however, it is more frank and more seemly to admit how little I have succeeded in my attempts.

5*th Strophe.*—I agreed with all the Academy, dear

sir, that the expression "*Assassins, juges à leur tour*" did not adequately develop the idea of assassins who sit in judgment on others after having lived in dread of judges so long themselves, but the time I have spent and often wasted over the other corrections prevented me from even thinking about this one.

7th Strophe.—The following note might come after it—

Moreau took the fort of l'Ecluse on the island of Cazand from a superior force of the enemy the very day on which his aged father was led to the scaffold. Patriotism must indeed have had a strong hold on the hearts of our soldiers to make them defend with such heroic resignation a country in which their dearest interests were daily betrayed in a disgraceful manner. Our army was fortunate in always being free from the reproaches which were levelled against our executioners. Do not let us forget that if it fought against its king, this was in opposing a foreign invasion, and that, as an illustrious author has said, its sword, thrown in the balance, weighed down the axe of the Revolution.

8th Strophe.—For the three first lines one of the two following versions may be substituted—

Quand nos phalanges mutilés
Jetant sur nos cyprès l'ombre de leurs lauriers,
Reculaient vers Paris, par le nombre accablées . . .

Quand nos chefs, entourés des armes étrangères
Couvrant nos cyprès de lauriers,
Vers Paris, lentement reportaient leurs bannières . . .

10th Strophe.—In its stead, a choice can be made between either of the two following strophes—

Ce dernier trait suffit: leur bonté les condamne.
Mais non: l'arbitre de leur sort,
Tainville, à leur aspect brûlant d'un feu profane,
Tressaille d'un honteux transport.
Il veut, vierges, au prix d'un affreux sacrifice,
En taisant vos bienfaits, vous ravir au supplice.
Il croit vos chastes cœurs par la crainte abattus;
Du mépris qui le couvre acceptez le partage;
Souillez-vous d'un forfait; l'infâme aréopage
Vous absoudra de vos vertus.

Quoi! ce trait glorieux qui trahit leur belle âme
Sera donc l'arrêt de leur mort.
Mais non! l'accusateur que leur aspect enflamme,
Tressaille d'un honteux transport.
Il veut, vierges, au prix d'un affreux sacrifice,
En taisant vos bienfaits, vous ravir au supplice.
Il croit vos chastes cœurs par la crainte abattus;
De vos jours Tainville est l'arbitre.
Souillez-vous d'un forfait: le monstre à ce seul titre
Vous absoudra de vos vertus.

11*th Strophe.*—Of the expressions, "*un si noble forfait, coupable de pitié,*" *etc.* which the Academy has pointed out as alike, I have only been able to strike out "*d'innocence accusées*" (7th strophe); "*lâchement accusées*" might be substituted for it: this alteration appeared to me more important than the others; the word "innocence" occurs two lines higher up. I am afraid, too, that this expression is a plagiarism; I have seen somewhere or other two lines in which something like it occurs—

. . . l'enfant sans appui, le vieillard sans défense,
Tombaient tous, convaincus d'une même innocence.

Finally, in the 13th strophe, "*Charlotte au cœur d'airain*" may be substituted for "*Charlotte au front d'airain.*"

PARIS, 16*th June* 1819.

DEAR SIR,—I have taken the liberty of calling on M. de Moncabrié, who has not yet received the copies of the collection of poems you had kindly intended for us. Perhaps I ought to have waited to acknowledge

the receipt of them before answering your kind letter of the 15th of May last; but pray excuse my anxiety to express our gratitude for the indulgent reception which the Academy has given to our works, and for the kindness with which you in particular have honoured us.

Allow me to thank you, dear sir, in my brother's name and my own, for the interest you take in us—an interest which is perhaps more strikingly shown by your critical remarks than by your praise, which quite overcomes us because we feel how little it is deserved.

Pray believe that we shall endeavour to merit your encomiums by taking advantage of your criticism, and that if at some future time we should both of us be fortunate enough to partly fulfil the hopes you entertain of us, we should owe it to the *Académie des Jeux Floraux*, to you, dear sir, and to your generous encouragement. What is most praiseworthy about our slender abilities is, no doubt, the direction in which we employ them; but the path which we wish to take is so beset with obstacles for young authors, that we should perhaps have been disheartened had we not been sustained by the glorious approbation of the oldest academy in the kingdom.

If our names have the good fortune to appear again in your academic ceremonies, we shall not forget your flattering invitation; and the pleasure of making your acquaintance, and of telling you by word of mouth how much we appreciate your kindness, will be not the least inducement to us to undertake so agreeable a journey.

My mother has been much touched by your kindness; she begs me to express her thanks to you.

She has known you, dear sir, by reputation, for some time, and the last paragraph of your letter has added not a little to the pleasure which our success has given her.

Pray accept the expression of the respect and gratitude with which I have the honour to remain, dear sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

V.-M. HUGO.

18th April 1820.

DEAR SIR,—It was only the entreaties of some of my friends that induced me to send the *Académie des Jeux Floraux* the ode *Moyse*, the many imperfections of which I was the first to feel. In according an *amaranthe reservée* to this work, the Academy has far surpassed all my hopes, and I feel I ought to look on this prize more as an encouragement than a reward. I take pleasure in acknowledging the justice of the criticisms addressed to me, and besides, I think that, in finding fault with the absence of all lyric movement in my ode, the Academy might have detected one of the reasons for it in the choice of the metre, which, with its feminine terminations, is incapable of rendering with marked effect the imposing imagery and the grand thoughts which such a subject ought to have called forth. This metre, which André de Chénier has employed with such success in his *Jeune captive*, is no doubt naturally melodious, but it is not sufficiently solemn or sonorous for grand poetry. Here,

then, is another mistake of mine: in adding this fresh criticism to the very judicious observations of the Academy I may be making a blunder, but I know I am acting frankly, and I am sure you will not think the worse of me for it. As to the points of detail, I regret that I have no time to make my ode more worthy of the flattering distinction which you have bestowed on it. I think, however, that in the 1st strophe "*chastes plaisirs*" might be altered to "*jeux innocents*," and in the 8th "*Ses malheurs ont ému mon amour*" to "*Ses malheurs éveillent mon amour*," if you think these corrections are admissible. I repeat, I regret that I have not the time; if I had, I would have endeavoured, by a searching revision of my ode, to make myself worthier of your distinguished approbation. As this is impossible, I can only beg you, dear sir, to convey my excuses and my warm acknowledgments to your colleagues.

If the idyll of the *Two Ages* could have obtained a prize, it would have been a great pleasure and a great honour to me; but, as it is, I can only bow with respect to the decision which prevented it from achieving this distinction.

I now, dear sir, come to a point on which I wish to state my views quite openly, while being anxious to obtain your approval. You tell me that I have now, according to your rules, acquired the right to apply for the degree of *Maître ès Jeux Floraux*. I refrain from inquiring how I acquired this right, and whether I do not owe it rather to the continued indulgence shown me by the Academy than to my own merit. I have only to tell you my feeling on the subject, and I think my duty (and never will a duty have been fulfilled with greater

pleasure) is to claim this distinction, to which the Academy has allowed me to aspire, with all the eagerness and gratitude which I feel under the circumstances. I might, it is true, retain the right to compete by putting off my application; but, on the one hand, if I am accustomed to the great kindness of the Academy, I am not so presumptuous or self-confident as to have much hope of success if I remain on the lists; and, on the other hand, as the lyric competitions are now closed to me, I am not sure whether the fruitless attempts I have hitherto made in other styles are not a warning to me to leave the ranks. I must add to these considerations the wish, which I have entertained for a long time, but have hitherto concealed, to belong to the illustrious society of the *Jeux Floraux*.

Now that the opportunity offers to join you as *maître*, I feel more strongly than ever how far too great this title is for my age and for my poor abilities, but at the same time I feel that, if you thought fit to confer it on me, the honour of bearing it would compel me in a measure to do my best to be worthy of it. I therefore venture to beg you, dear sir, if you see fit, to convey my respectful wishes to the Academy, and to apply to it in my name for a degree which I shall highly prize if I obtain it, as it will constantly remind me how much I owe to you personally and to your colleagues. I do not know if I ought to send a more direct application to the Academy, but I hope that, in case you cannot undertake it, you will be so kind as to let me know.

I am particularly flattered, dear sir, that my odes on La Vendée and the terrible crime of February 13 have

given you some pleasure. In sending you my attempts, I am only discharging a very pleasant duty, and I shall be glad if you will continue to give me your opinion. I have now the honour to forward you two copies of a satire, now somewhat out of date, but which at the time it appeared (October 1819) was considered a proof of courage, if not of talent, in Paris. I have sent with it the first number of the *Conservateur littéraire*. In this work, which I am helping to edit, you will see the expression of approbation which His Majesty condescended to give me on the occasion of the ode I wrote on the death of the Duke of Berri. I think the *Conservateur littéraire* may be useful, and I hope that you will think so too when you have read it. Thank you for the friendly remark at the end of your kind letter. I have every reason to believe that our *Conservateur*, the success of which appears assured in the capital, will now circulate in the departments, and in that case I shall take special care that it reaches your province, which is now perhaps the only one that has retained its love of letters and devotion to the monarchy intact. I must end this too long letter by congratulating you, dear sir, in my turn, on the address sent by your *cour royale* on the horrible assassination of the Duke of Berri: it made an excellent impression here; it was singled out among all the addresses of the other towns in the kingdom; and everybody knows that the loyal sentiments with which your *cour royale* is animated are shared by the good town of Toulouse and the noble *Académie des Jeux Floraux*. With the most respectful gratitude, I have the honour to be, dear sir, etc., V.-M. HUGO.

P.S.—My brother Eugène, who has been prevented by ill health from competing this year, but who hopes to try again in 1821, begs me to remember him to you, and to convey you his respects. Having obtained an *amaranthe* in 1819, I have decided this year to take, instead of the flower, the sum of money which the Academy gives me the option of receiving. If there are any formalities to be complied with in respect to this, I hope you will be good enough to acquaint me with them.

[21*st May* 1820.]

DEAR SIR,—I eagerly avail myself of my first leisure moments to answer your kind letter, and to beg you to convey to the Academy my warm and respectful thanks for having admitted me to the degree of *Maître ès Jeux Floraux.* Pardon me for repeating the same thing so often, but the repeated proofs of the consideration shown me by the Academy give me the right—indeed, I may say, make it my duty—to do so. Rest assured, dear sir, that I shall gladly discharge all the duties which my new position entails on me. Before long, when I have grasped the full extent of them, by studying the useful book by M. Poitevin which you have been good enough to send me (a mark of attention which much pleased me), I shall have the honour of writing to you on the subject, and I shall do my best to make the Academy satisfied, if not with my ability, at all events with my zeal.

APPENDIX

We have been much flattered by the opinion you have expressed of the *Conservateur littéraire.* As the perusal of it has given you pleasure, I beg you, on behalf of myself and of my colleagues, to accept our publication. I will take care that it reaches you regularly. You will have seen in the third number of the second volume that I had inserted an extract from your programme, in accordance with your wish. I regret there was not enough space for a more detailed account of the proceedings of the Academy. I think the subject will be mentioned again. I have asked several journalists with whom I am connected to insert the heads of the programme in their papers, and they have promised to do so as soon as the immense amount of political matter will allow of it. As far as the *Conservateur littéraire* is concerned, I beg you will not hesitate to make use of me if I can be of any service to you. You will greatly honour me by often treating me as a *confrère.* Whenever you wish to publish any advertisements, or the report of the proceedings of the Academy, I can assure you your wishes shall be carried out, and it will be a real pleasure to us to comply with them.

My brother Eugène, whose health is still uncertain, begs me to present his compliments to you, and to thank you for your kind and flattering invitation. He was much distressed at the illness which prevented him from competing this year, and he hopes by next year to have recovered his strength sufficiently to be able to enter the noble lists you have thrown open to him. It has become a duty which he will be happy to discharge, especially if he can do it worthily.

I cannot thank you enough, dear sir, on my own account, for your kind attention in sending me the value of the prize in a draft on Paris. All the marks of kindness which I have received from you up to now touch me more than I can say. I have the honour to enclose the declaration you asked me for, and, with the deepest feelings of respect and gratitude, I beg you will believe me to be always your most obedient, humble servant,

V.-M. HUGO.

P.S.—I do not know if you have received the two first numbers of vol. ii. regularly. If you have not done so, pray draw my attention to it in the first letter you will do me the honour of writing to me, and I will send them on to you.

24th October 1820.

DEAR SIR,—Allow me to remind you of my existence by sending you some copies of an ode that I have just published on the death of the Duke of Bordeaux, and which you may have read by now in the *Conservateur littéraire*. I am most anxious that this ode should not appear to you unworthy of the approbation which you have sometimes bestowed on me. I owe everything to the *Académie des Jeux Floraux*, and it will always be a pleasure to me to make public acknowledgment of it, as I shall always consider it a duty to endeavour to deserve the many favours it has showered on me.

APPENDIX

M. Alexandre Soumet has been here for some time, and has told me a great deal about the interest which the Academy is good enough to take in my efforts, and the flattering sentiments which you, dear sir, in particular entertain towards me. I had recourse to M. Soumet's advice in correcting this new ode, and I am much indebted to his friendly assistance. He read part of his tragedy of *Oreste* to me; the fifth act is really admirable. I hope very much that the business which brought him to Paris may be settled to his satisfaction, and still more, that his tragedy may be well acted, for, if I wish him success in money matters, I must be still more concerned for his literary fame: a poet cannot take this amiss.

As for me, dear sir, the next ode I write will be for the Academy; and if, in accordance with my wish, you will consent to read it at one of your meetings, it will to a certain extent be protected by the celebrity of the society of the *Jeux Floraux*. I cannot promise you that the new-comer will be worthy of the welcome you will be good enough to give it, but I promise to use every effort to make it so.

I hope, dear sir, that you will continue to treat me with the kindliness of which you have already given me so many tokens, and for which I am deeply grateful. I beg you to excuse this untidy letter, written in great haste, and to believe in the feelings of high esteem and respectful consideration with which I have the honour to be, dear sir, etc., V.-M. HUGO.

P.S.—As I am not sure if the secretary of the *Conservateur littéraire* has carried out the order I gave

him to send you some copies of my ode to M. de Chateaubriand, I have put a few in the packet which I have the honour of forwarding to you.

28th March 1821.

DEAR SIR,—I value your letters so highly that it is a source of great regret to me that I cannot write to you oftener, so as to receive your kind answers more frequently; but, unfortunately for me, I have not so much leisure as goodwill, which, in depriving me of a pleasure I appreciate so highly, has the advantage of protecting you from an importunity.

You have doubtless been surprised, dear sir, that my brother Eugène has not responded to the invitation you so kindly sent him. But I assure you it is only his bad health which prevented him from entering the lists, in which you were good enough to almost promise him a victory. It has been a great disappointment to him to forego the pleasure of celebrating the illustrious Malesherbes, and the honour of competing for your beautiful wreaths.

As for me, dear sir, to whom these wreaths have been awarded with an indulgence which overwhelms me as much as it honours me, I am endeavouring to become less unworthy of the distinction which the Academy has been good enough to confer on me by admitting me among its *maîtres* at my age. This signal and unmerited favour is a great encouragement and a great obligation.

I feel this with apprehension in sending you a new ode on the frightful treason of Quiberon. It was written for the Academy; I have therefore always refused to publish it, or to allow any isolated stanzas to appear in the papers. I wanted your *Recueil* to have it before anyone else, if (and I should be pleased were this the case) you consider that it can be read at your brilliant meeting of the 3rd of May, without spoiling the effect of the *séance* too much.

À propos of the meeting of the 3rd of May, allow me, dear sir, to refer to the competitions. I take the liberty of specially drawing your enlightened attention to an *Ode sur les troubles actuels de l'Europe*, to an elegy entitled *Symétha*, and to another elegy, *Le Convoi de l'Émigré*, all of which appear to me to show some talent. I should be glad if these works could obtain some recognition; I should be even more glad than their authors, on account of the affection I have for them. I also thought there was a great deal of wit in an essay on *Les genres classique et romantique*, which bears the motto, *Rien de nouveau sous le soleil*, and some pretty lines in a poem entitled *Sur l'enfance d'Henri IV.*

Pray forgive my presumption in recommending my friends; I know by experience, that if an appeal is made to your justice, you are always ready to respond with indulgence. Someone has said that one's affection for a person may be measured by the length of one's letters to him. I hope, therefore, that you will excuse the length of this one, for you must know the deep and unvarying attachment with which I have the honour to be, dear sir, etc., VICTOR-M. HUGO.

My address is altered. I am now living at 10 Rue Mézières (Faubourg Saint-Germain). M. Soumet begs to be remembered to you; but a poet like Alexandre Soumet has no need of being remembered to anyone.

[14*th July* 1821.]

MY DEAR COLLEAGUE,—I have been prevented from answering your letter before by a long period of anxiety, ending in a terrible calamity, of which you have doubtless read in the papers—a calamity for which there is no consolation but in heaven, and no hope but in death. My mother died in my arms, after a long illness. If you have any regard for me, pity me, excuse this short letter, and believe in the unaltered attachment and gratitude of your most obedient, humble servant and colleague,

VICTOR-M. HUGO.

I hope soon to have the courage to write to you at greater length. I will then thank you for the counter you were good enough to send me by M. Hocquart. M. Soumet and his brother beg to be remembered to you.

PARIS, 14*th August* 1821.

MY DEAR COLLEAGUE,—I should not forgive myself for not having answered your letter sooner, with its expressions of condolence that I prize so highly, if I

had not been seriously unwell and obliged to go into the country for a short time, immediately after having executed the commission to M. de Chateaubriand which you gave me on behalf of the Academy. It is for me, dear sir, to thank you warmly for having been good enough to confide this mission to me. This fresh connection has in a way strengthened my friendship with the illustrious peer, and this is another thing which I have to thank you for.

I am not less indebted to you for all the tender and delicate expressions of feeling contained in your letter. They touched me most deeply. In my irreparable calamity a friendship such as yours is a consolation to me, and I am proud of the intimacy existing between us, which makes us love and understand each other without having met or spoken to each other. Should you ever (which God forbid!) have a great personal sorrow, I hope you may find a friend like yourself, for the only point in which I can compare with you is my affection for you.

M. de Chateaubriand accepted his diploma in the most graceful way, and told me that he would write and thank the Academy. All lovers of literature congratulate the Academy on this glorious acquisition. If I may say so, I agree with you in thinking that it had been postponed somewhat too long.

Farewell, my dear friend; I have sufficient confidence in your indulgence to send you this illegible letter. I wanted to write to you as soon as I was able to hold a pen. I am still weak, and have only strength enough to love you.

I have the honour to be, with the highest esteem and the most complete devotion, your most obedient, humble servant and colleague,

VICTOR-M. HUGO.

PARIS, *24th October* 1822.

MY DEAR COLLEAGUE,—Your kind letter came upon me as a gentle surprise in a moment of happiness. I have always highly valued the proofs of your kind friendship, and, when I received this last token of it, it gave me all the greater pleasure, because it seemed as if a part of yourself, my dear friend, was a witness of my felicity.

I am anxious to be the first to tell you that I am married, that I have just been united to the sweetest, the most angelic, and the most beloved of women. You have contributed to what you are good enough to call my success, you sympathised with me in my sorrow, and I have no doubt but that you will also rejoice with me in my happiness.

I am glad that the collection of poems interested you, and, still more, that the opinions which you express so gracefully coincide with mine. I hope that when the second edition of these odes appears, which will be before long, that they will be more deserving of your attention, dear sir, and of that of all the enlightened men to whose approbation I aspire.

I am aware that M. de Rességuier has been in Paris

for four or five days; he came to call on me, and I was stupid enough and unlucky enough to be out at the time. I hope, however, to see him soon, and I shall have much pleasure in giving him your message.

This amiable colleague of ours will doubtless be able to give you details of *Clytemnestre* much better than I can, but I may tell you that this fine play is to be acted at the end of the month, that it will be followed immediately by *Saül* at the second theatre, and that these two splendid works will give our good colleague, Soumet, a great and unique reputation. In making this prophecy, I am in no way inspired by friendship.

Farewell, then; accept once more my thanks for the very great pleasure your letters give me, and believe, dear sir, that my most highly-prized distinction will always be that of styling myself your colleague, your servant, and friend,

VICTOR H.

M. Soumet, to whom I have shown your kind letter, thanks you and loves you as I do, but not more than I do.

PARIS, 11*th December* 1822.

MY DEAR COLLEAGUE,—Pray forgive me for not having yet answered your charming letter, which brought something of your friendship into the midst of my newly-found felicity, and made me feel that one of the greatest

bonheurs du bonheur, if one may use the expression, is to see it shared in by one's friends.

To-day, dear sir, I am fortunate enough to have the pleasure of asking you to do me a service, as well as that of thanking you for a charming letter. You have perhaps forgotten that you have a *confrère* who is also a *conscrit*: do not laugh at this jingle of words; I will explain it. As I was born at the beginning of the year 1802, I really form one of the annual levy of forty thousand men.

It is true that I have good grounds for exemption, and you can no doubt guess what they are, my dear colleague; but tedious formalities, for which I beg you to excuse their authors, oblige me to ask you to plead my cause to some extent.

The recruiting law grants exemption from military service to all persons who have won one of the principal prizes at the Institute, including the *prix d'honneur de l'Université*. The omission by the Legislature of the prizes of the second academy in the kingdom is repaired by the spirit of the law, and, from the information I have obtained, I am certain that a favourable construction has been placed on this paragraph of the law, on the application of permanent secretaries, for prizes given by much less important academies than that of the *Jeux Floraux*. I venture to hope, then, from the extreme kindness of which you have given me so many proofs, that you will be good enough to claim for me the right of exemption which the three wreaths bestowed on me by the indulgence of the Academy confer on me—the valued wreaths to which I owe the honour, so ill suited

to my age and my small ability, of being a member of it; you will be pleading the cause of the Academy even more than mine, my dear colleague, you will be defending its prerogatives, for the law could hardly grant greater privileges to a mere laureate of the Institute, or of the University even, than to a member of one of the oldest and most illustrious literary societies in Europe. This is the service which I shall have to add to all the obligations which I owe you already. If you are good enough to make this application as permanent secretary of the Academy, you must send it to the Home Secretary (*bureau des Académies*); it will be sent on to the War Office (*bureau du recrutement*), and I am assured that it will be successful there.

Pray forgive me for all the trouble I am giving you, and let me know how you are getting on. Is Toulouse very proud of her Soumet? Rességuier, who is as kind as his letters, will give you all the details of it that you may wish. I am going to send the Academy a copy of the collection of poems of which you formed such an indulgent opinion; please apologise for me to our colleagues for the incorrigible carelessness of my publisher. I am preparing a second edition, with some alterations and corrections. There is only one thing in me which cannot change, and that is my tender affection for those I love, and especially for you, my dear good colleague. —Your most devoted friend and servant,

VICTOR-M. HUGO.

My wife was much pleased with your kind messages, and begs me to thank you for them.

PARIS, *8th January* 1823.

MY DEAR COLLEAGUE,—What pleases me most in the important service you have just so kindly rendered me is the fact that it was rendered by you. For a long time I have fallen into the pleasant habit of being indebted to you, and all I can wish for now is to have the good fortune of being able to serve you sometimes in return. I was much gratified by your kind thought in sending me your application on my behalf, and quite overcome by all the expressions of kindness and praise with which your friendship inspired you for the least worthy of your colleagues.

I have just published the second edition of my odes, with additions and corrections. I have told my publisher to send you two copies; one of these I hope you will be kind enough to accept from me, and the other I beg you to present to the Academy on my behalf.

I have reason to believe that the competition for the *Jeux Floraux* this year will be a brilliant one. I have seen several of the compositions which are to be sent to you, and I can assure you that your fine wreaths will be the reward of some fine volumes.

M. Soumet and M. Rességuier beg me, my dear colleague, to convey to you on their behalf all that I feel for you—that is to say, the warmest, tenderest, and sincerest feelings that esteem and attachment can inspire.

VICTOR HUGO.

My wife thanks you, as I do, for all the kind messages to her in your letter.

APPENDIX

GENTILLY, *9th June* 1823.

MY DEAR COLLEAGUE, — Our good friend Jules de Rességuier has shown me your letter, and I was much touched by the kind and affectionate messages for me in it. I was not less sensible of the kind feeling that prompted you to mention my name at your memorable meeting; you wished that some of the glory conferred on the old *fête des fleurs* by the presence of an illustrious spectator might be reflected on me. I thank you for this. You have touched my heart even more than you have flattered my pride.

Please let me know if you have received the second edition of my odes, as well as an indifferent work in four volumes entitled *Han d'Islande*. Some time ago I told my former publisher, Persan, to forward you these works, which I was also sending to the Academy. He has since become bankrupt, and, having discovered several cases in which he had neglected to carry out my orders, I should like to make sure that yours was not among the number.

Farewell, my good colleague; my wife, who is going on well, shares the deep feeling of sincere affection felt for you by your most humble servant and unworthy colleague,

VICTOR HUGO.

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